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## TEST YOUR SOCCER KNOWLEDGE

The off-season is a time in all football fans' lives when they twiddle their thumbs, irritate their families and wait for the beautiful game to once again grace their TV screens.

Well, the wait is finally over, and with local League and cup action already underway, we can all breathe a sigh of relief and get on with watching the sport we love.

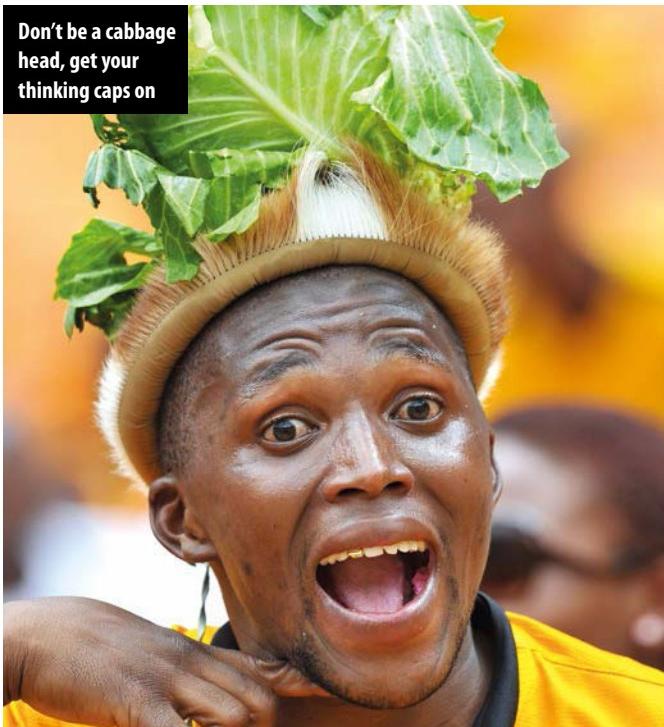
But the season is about more than just the heated debates, the cries of anguish or the screams of delight – in our hearts we're all couch coaches, and KICK OFF is once again giving you the chance to prove that you're the most knowledgeable armchair coach in the country.

The KICK OFF Fantasy League and the KICK OFF Predictor League both offer you the platform to showcase your in-depth knowledge of players, coaching tactics, form, fixtures and where and when the upset results might happen.

Not only will you prove your worth, but you'll also stand the chance to win brilliant weekly, monthly and grand prizes including airtime and electronics bundles. And remember, it doesn't matter when you join – you can win every week!

And playing the Fantasy League and Predictor comes with an additional benefit – the more you play, the greater your knowledge and

Don't be a cabbage head, get your thinking caps on



understanding of the game will become. You'll become better at selecting the right players at the right time, and foreseeing all the subtle ebbs and flows that make a season exciting!

And that will make your arguments stronger when you debate with your mates the merits of different players and clubs and discuss strategies, tactics and performances.

Of course, reading 'Soccer at its Best' every month also gives you an inside edge, and this month we have some top-notch features and analysis for you.

Turn to page 44 to discover the highest value PSL transfers – never before has a list

of this nature been compiled. And we partner this with a look at the 11 greatest signings of the Premiership era. Both features beg the question: is splashing massive cash always the best solution?

There is more analysis on page 34: when we consider the question, is there are right time and a wrong time during the season to bring in a new coach? Our analysis suggests there is.

We have also brought back some of your old favourites, like Secrets of the Stars, Best of the Best and – by popular demand – the Secret Footballer (see page 74).

**Richard Maguire**  
Editor

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PICTURE LEFT: SHIVAMBI/GALO IMAGES/1



**Sandwiched – Hlompho Kekana of Mamelodi Sundowns is clattered by Ndumiso Mabena and Letladi Madubanya of Platinum Stars in their opening fixture of the PSL season.**

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# FROM SHY BOY TO LEADER



## DID YOU KNOW?

Tshabalala has never ended up on the losing side when he has scored for Bafana Bafana. In 12 matches when he has scored, South Africa have won 10 and drawn two.



Kaizer Chiefs skipper **Siphiwe Tshabalala** has matured a great deal since he arrived at the club in 2007, according to his former teammate Fabian McCarthy.

BY TIYANI WA KA MABASA

In January 2007, a young boy called Siphiwe Tshabalala arrived at Kaizer Chiefs' village after signing for the club. At the time he was carrying a serious knee injury and was sidelined for six months, which meant he missed out on the second half of the 2006/07 season.

Six months later he made his return to the field and started training with his new teammates ahead of the 2007/08 season (see page 53). He appeared very uncomfortable among his new big-name teammates including Shaun Bartlett, Cyril Nzama, Arthur Zwane, Fabian McCarthy, Jimmy Tau, Tinashe Nengomasha and Kaizer Motaung Junior.

The previous year, 'Shabba' had been a surprise selection in Bafana Bafana's 2006 Africa Cup of Nations squad while playing in the First Division with Free State Stars, but despite his national team exposure, he seemed very shy.

It wasn't long before old campaigners like Bartlett and McCarthy picked up that the 22-year-old needed help settling down at star-studded Naturena.

"Shabba was very shy when he arrived. I was one of the guys who decided to take him out for lunch at Cresta Mall [in Johannesburg]. It was me, Shaun Bartlett and Jimmy Tau," McCarthy recalls.

"We picked up he was a shy guy in a new team – a big team. I came the same way from Bloemfontein Celtic and found Chiefs was a completely different set-up, even though I had played for Sundowns.

"So the four of us went to lunch to make him feel welcome and Shaun was ordering some seafood and said, 'This guy must eat all of that'.

"Shabba's eyes grew big – he'd never seen a seafood platter that big before!

"Of course, Shaun was joking ... it was part of getting to know Shabba, of making that personal connection with him. We always did that with new players – Gert Schalkwyk and others.

"We'd have a laugh, enjoy the food, and it helped the boys settle."

Fast forward eight years, and McCarthy says he sees how far off the mark his first impressions of Shabba were – the nervous, reserved young man has matured into a confident, experienced campaigner who is ready and able to lead South Africa's most popular club.

"He is not the kind of leader who will be loud and show off. He has what it takes to lead the team; he has that level of professionalism," McCarthy says.

"You are not necessarily a leader because you are loud, arguing with the referees, showing off and all those things. You just need to solve

situations and show the players how to do things. Shabba is mature on and off the field.

"Don't judge him on being loud; that's not a captain. A captain is someone who, when the chips are down, is able to get the team going before looking at himself.

"The captain is supposed to show he cares about all his teammates, including the boy who is sitting there upstairs and is not making the team. He must speak to him and encourage him. It is a big responsibility, and I'm confident Shabba has what it takes."

Chiefs' previous captain Tefu Mashamaite echoes McCarthy's sentiments, telling KICK OFF the fact that Tshabalala is never in the tabloids ➤

### This is your captain speaking

*"It is a great honour and I'm truly thankful to be leading Kaizer Chiefs. I accept the challenge and the good thing is I know I have the backing of the players, technical team and management. I consider it a huge achievement to be leading a team of this calibre and hopefully I will help bring more success. I'm driven because I always want more. I want to leave a great legacy and this sort of responsibility will help me do just that."*

## Chasing the magical 100



THE chase to reach 100 South Africa caps remains alive for Siphiwe Tshabalala, despite the length of time that has passed since he last pulled on a Bafana Bafana jersey. The new Kaizer Chiefs captain is refusing to give up on the dream of reaching the magical century.

Only Aaron Mokoena has passed that mark, with 107 caps to his name in an 11-year international career. At 88 caps, 'Shabba' still has hopes of surpassing Mokoena, although the 30-year-old has not played for Bafana Bafana since the disastrous Chan tournament in Cape Town last year.

"I still want to play for the national team," Tshabalala states emphatically.

"I know I will not just get a call-up without having worked very hard and I don't expect any favours. I just have to work hard and earn it, and it all starts here at Chiefs. I just pray that I will be injury-free this season."

However, having missed the 24 internationals played since his last appearance, is the drive to return

genuinely still there – especially considering that Shakes Mashaba is favouring youth over experience?

"Definitely," Tshabalala responds. "One call-up will lead to another and I think it is every footballer's desire to strive for more; you cannot afford to be in a comfort zone."

The dreadlocked midfielder won his first cap against Egypt in January 2006 as a substitute in a friendly before that year's Afcon. He was playing First Division football for Free State Stars at the time.

Of the other five players standing behind Tshabalala in the most-capped list of players, only Siyabonga Nomvete (82 caps) remains active, but his chances of adding to that tally are unlikely as he nears his 38th birthday.

Bafana face Mauritania in their next 2017 Nations Cup Qualifying Group M match on 4 September.

By Lovemore Moyo

for the wrong reasons will stand him in good stead in leading the team.

Like Tshabalala, 'Masha' has what could be described as a clean image, and feels a leader with integrity enjoys the support of those around him.

"It is great for him to follow in the footsteps of the likes of Neil Tovey, who captained the club in the past," Mashamaite says.

"You know, leadership is more about following than leading most of the time. It comes as a surprise that he said he learned from me, among others, because I thought it was the other way round.

"I learned a lot from those guys, especially those who played for Bafana Bafana like Shabba himself, and also 'Yeye' [Letsholonyane], Tsepo Masilela and Morgan Gould. I was looking for advice from them more than I was offering," says Masha, who has since joined Swedish side BK Hacken.

"It is also good for Shabba that he still has those players around him. But most importantly, Shabba loves football and I think he's going to lead Chiefs to greater things.

"As a leader, you really have to watch your step in whatever you do. Being disciplined helps a lot and I think Shabba is a very disciplined individual. I think he is perfect for this job." **KO**



► **Full name:** Siphiwe Lawrence Tshabalala ► **Born:** 25/9/84 in Phiri, Soweto

► **Previous teams:** Phiri Arsenal, Red Lions, Phiri Movers (all amateur), Kaizer Chiefs juniors, Moroka Swallows juniors, Alexandra United

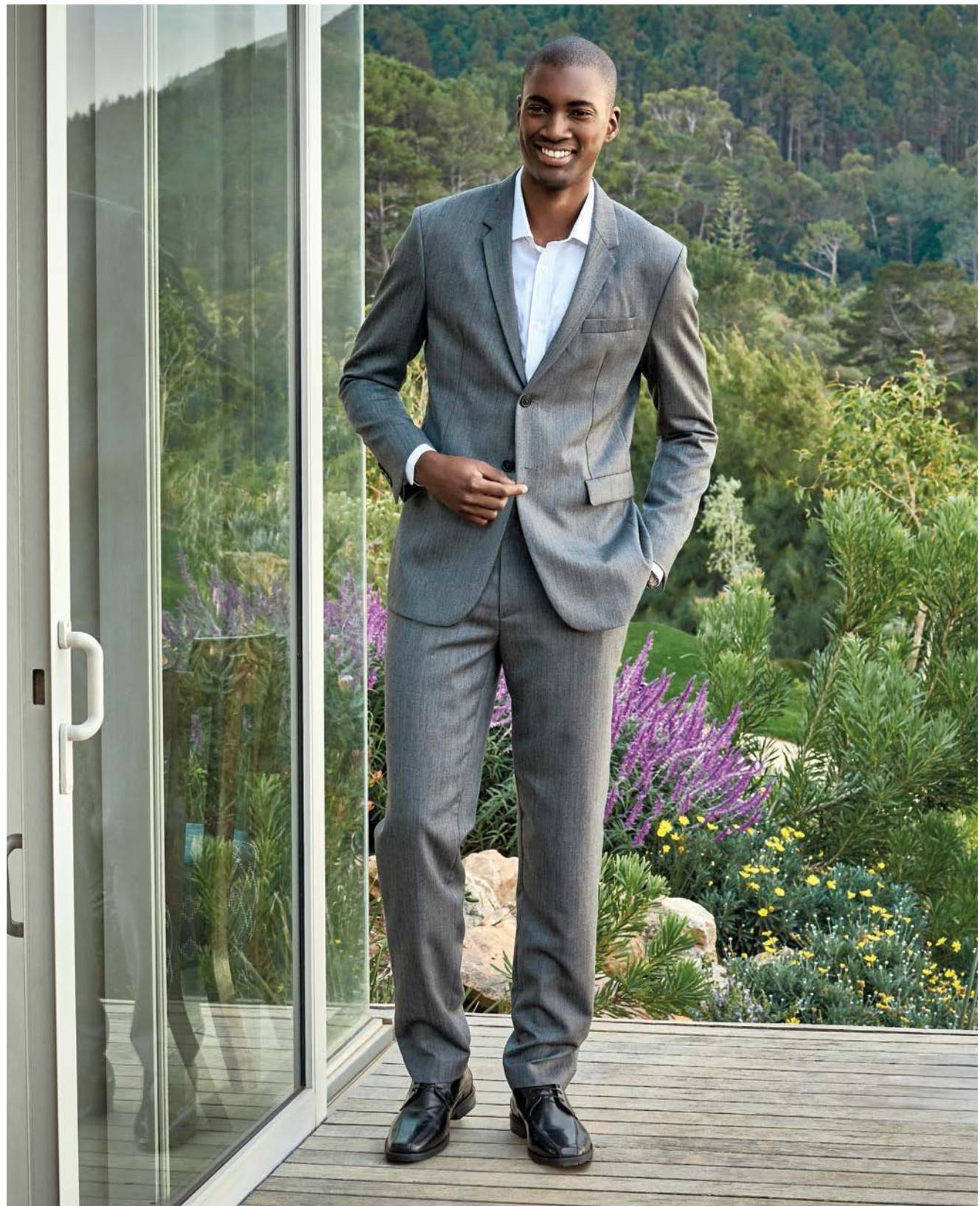
► **Professional debut:** Free State Stars 1 North West Tigers 0 (12/9/04) ► **First goal:** Free State Stars 1 Bloem Young Tigers 0 (22/1/05) ► **Kaizer Chiefs debut:** Kaizer Chiefs 0 Bidvest Wits 1 (31/8/07, as a sub)

► **Full Chiefs debut:** SuperSport United 0 Kaizer Chiefs 0 (16/9/07) ► **International debut:** Egypt 1 South Africa 2 (14/1/06, Friendly, as a sub) ► **Full debut:** Zambia 1 South Africa 0 (30/1/06, African Nations Cup) ► **First international goal:** South Africa 2 Zimbabwe 1 (11/3/08) ► **Honours:** 88 Senior international caps (12 goals); 2007 Cosafa Castle Cup winner; 2012/13, 2014/15 PSL Champion; 2013 Nedbank Cup winner; 2007, 2010 Telkom Knockout winner, 2008, 2014 MTN8 winner, 2004/05 National First Division champions; 2006 Baymed Cup winner, 2010 Safa Footballer of the Year

**Career history:**

SEASON	CLUB	MATCHES	GOALS
03/04	Alexandra United (Div. 1)	-	-
04/05	Free State Stars (Div. 1)	23 (+ 6 subs)	3
05/06	Free State Stars	21 (+ 3 subs)	7
06/07	Free State Stars (Div. 1)	13 (+ 1 sub)	2
	Kaizer Chiefs	Did not play	
07/08	Kaizer Chiefs	25 (+ 2 sub)	3
08/09	Kaizer Chiefs	36	7
09/10	Kaizer Chiefs	19 (+ 8 subs)	7
10/11	Kaizer Chiefs	24 (+ 1 sub)	9
11/12	Kaizer Chiefs	33	4
12/13	Kaizer Chiefs	35	4
13/14	Kaizer Chiefs	37 (+ 3 sub)	3
14/15	Kaizer Chiefs	23 (+ 7 sub)	4
15/16	Kaizer Chiefs	2	0
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>291</b>	<b>53</b>

Correct as at 13/8/15. League and cup games only. Pre-season and friendly matches not included.



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# SUNDOWNS' BIG THREE

**Mamelodi Sundowns** have been more restrained in the transfer market than usual – but this does not mean they have not been splashing big cash. Lovemore Moyo interviews the Brazilians' three top signings.

## THE BALL PLAYER

**KEAGAN DOLLY** is already being embraced as a fan-favourite at Sundowns.

**KICKOFF:** How does it feel to be closer to home now that you are back in Gauteng?

**KEAGAN DOLLY:** It is very nice to be back with my family and to see them whenever I want. It has been almost eight years that I have been on my own so I am happy to be back home. It helps to be closer to home because at times you need people close to you, people that you can share personal things with. I am able to be home in Westbury at least once a week

However, I must point out that over the past years I've learnt to deal with stuff on my own.

**I have vivid memories from your first ever PSL game. Do you remember that game?**

It was against Moroka Swallows at Dobsonville Stadium and I came on as a substitute, playing about 15 minutes ... Ajax lost 3-1. My whole family came to the stadium in a kombi that day; I think there were about 20 people that came to watch me. I also remember that in my second game at home against Platinum Stars – which was my first start – I scored and we won.

**Do you feel your time at Ajax prepared you for this challenge at Sundowns?**

I think they prepared me well by giving me the platform to start off my career and have a taste of the PSL. I got game-time and gained a bit of experience too.

**Why do you think Sundowns signed you?**

I think the way I play suits the style of play here at Sundowns because I am a ball player. I am also quick and I've got a bit of skill, so I think I fit in quite well.

**Maintaining consistency is a big challenge for players in South Africa ...**

I have to admit that this is a problem with most youngsters here in South Africa. We tend to let things get into our heads quickly, but I'm lucky I have my family and my girlfriend to keep me level-headed. Then I also have my teammates and coaches who always encourage me to work even harder.

**How does Pitso Mosimane plan to make use of you?**

We haven't really had a deep conversation, though he spoke to me and made me aware of the fact that I must not be afraid to play. He told me that I must feel at home and he is always encouraging me to play my normal game.

**What do you believe is achievable in this season?**

For me, this season should be more about learning from the older and more experienced players like Surprise [Moriri] and Teko [Modise]. I also need to make sure that I contribute to the team's success and try to regain the championship while also winning some trophies.

Sundowns' star signings (from left): Fiston Razak, Keagan Dolly and Mogakolodi Ngele

**You just mentioned Teko who has made known his admiration of your qualities ...**  
It always enjoyed watching Teko playing! I remember I was at the School of Excellence – I was about 14 – when I first saw Teko playing, and to be rubbing shoulders with him now is it a great honour. He is always talking to me, encouraging me and telling me not to be afraid to play. He is always there for me. **The League title is normally what defines a successful season for Sundowns. How determined are you to get your hands on that trophy this season?**

It has always been my ambition to win the PSL title and I am here to try and help the team bring the trophy back home to Chloorkop.

**You have been knocking hard on the Bafana door. Is Sundowns a path towards the senior national team?**

Coach Shakes was at the two games that we played against Zimbabwe and he spoke to me. My chances are slightly higher here at Sundowns because we play a good brand of football, so I am genuinely hopeful that the call-ups will keep on coming.

**Steven Pienaar is your idol as he also comes from your hood and played for Westbury Arsenal, the School of Excellence and Ajax just like you ...**  
He is always overseas while I am always here so we don't really talk. However, when he does come down during the off-season to his tournament we speak. He has mentioned my name in a few interviews and even on social media. It is always good to know that a person like him notices me. I have always looked up to him and I have always wanted to try and achieve what he has achieved in life.



► **Full name:** Keagan Dolly ► **Born:** 22/1/93 in Westbury, Johannesburg ► **Original club:** Westbury Arsenal (amateur) ► **Sources:** Safa-Transnet School of Excellence, Mamelodi Sundowns juniors

► **Previous clubs:** ALS Puk Tawana, M Tigers, Ajax Cape Town reserves, Ajax Cape Town ► **PSL Debut:** Moroka Swallows 3 Ajax Cape Town 1 (PSL, 22/8/12, as a sub) ► **Full PSL debut:** Ajax Cape Town 4 Platinum Stars 1 (PSL, 31/8/12) ► **First goal:** Ajax Cape Town 4 Platinum Stars 1 (PSL, 31/8/12) ► **International debut:** South Africa 3 Sudan 0 (Nations Cup qualifier, 5/9/14)

► **Previous clubs:** Sundowns juniors, ALS Puk Tawana, M Tigers, Ajax Reserves ► **Honours:** 2013-14 ABSA Premiership Young Player of the Season 1 Cap, Under-20 international, Under-23 international

#### Career history:

SEASON	CLUB	MATCHES	GOALS
12/13	Ajax	8 (+4 sub)	1
13/14	Ajax	25 (+3 sub)	3
14/15	Ajax	17 (+3 sub)	2
15/16	Sundowns	1	0
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>51</b>	<b>6</b>

Correct as at 14/08/2015. League and Cup matches only. Charity games and friendlies not included.

Razak celebrates with new teammate Themba Zwane after scoring on his Sundowns debut in the MTN8



## TARGET: 20 GOALS

**FISTON ABDUL RAZAK** is a Burundi international striker.

**KICK OFF: How does it feel to be a Sundowns player?**

**FISTON ABDUL RAZAK:** I am very happy to be here at Sundowns [huge smile]. This is a team that I like.

#### Describe your first days at Sundowns?

It wasn't easy for me to be at a new team with players that really didn't know how I play and who I also didn't know very well. However, I have tried to do my best and even in pre-season I scored a few goals. I feel I am getting better and think I am a part of the team now. The huge difference that I have noticed between the Kenyan Premier League where I was playing and the PSL is that here the game is played at a very fast pace. It is quick.

**You scored on debut against Bloemfontein Celtic ...**

I was delighted and that goal gave me the courage to push so that I can go on and score more goals in games to come. Scoring in your first game always helps you calm down as a striker. When I scored that goal I showed the sign of the club as a way of showing the fans that I love this club and am here to do a job for them.

**Are you aware of the huge demands that come with playing for Sundowns?**

I know, and that is why I promise to work hard to make sure that I score more goals.

**Have you set a target for the number of goals you aim to score this season?**

I think 18-20 goals in all competitions should be where I get this season. I say this because in Kenya I finished my season with 20 goals, and though I would have preferably wanted to better this, I think I will be fine with at least 15 goals, though 18 to 20 is what I will be happy with.

**Are you aware that this is a league that is notorious for low scoring totals?**

I know that it is very difficult for strikers to score plenty goals in this league, but if I have a target of 15-20 goals and I don't get there, then I will at least get 12-13 goals.

**How much do you know about Sundowns and the PSL?**

Before I came here I was always watching the games on television. So I was already aware of what to expect and I was very happy with what I saw of the club, especially the way they play. When I came here for Chan 2014 I spoke to my friend Papy Fatty and he told me that Sundowns is a good club. Since then I wanted to join Sundowns and not any other team. Ajax Cape Town and Platinum Stars were also interested and Platinum actually sent me



Ngele is ready for the challenge at Sundowns after joining from Platinum Stars, who he faced in his new side's season-opening League fixture

an invitation for trials, but I didn't go. When it was Sundowns I came directly. **You already trained with Sundowns in March, but only officially joined in June?** Sundowns spoke to my agent and he told them to watch some of my games that I was playing in Kenya. When we played FC Platinum of Zimbabwe in the CAF Confederation Cup, Sundowns were watching me ... I scored in both legs. Straight afterwards they sent me an invitation to come for trials. FC Platinum of Zimbabwe were also interested, but the moment they heard that Sundowns were in discussions with me they are stepped aside.

#### Describe your contribution to the Burundi national team?

I am a regular and in the last game that we played against Senegal, I was even the captain of the team.

► **Full name:** Fiston Abdul Razak ► **Born:** 5/9/93 in Bujumbura, Burundi ► **Original club:** Lydia Ludic Academy ► **Sources:** LLB Academic

► **Previous clubs:** Diables Noirs (Congo-Brazzaville), Sofapaka (Kenya) ► **PSL Debut:** Sundowns 1 Bloem Celtic 1 (5/8/15, MTN8) ► **First goal:** Sundowns 1 Bloem Celtic (5/8/15, MTN8) ► **Honours:** 2014 Kenyan President's Cup, Burundi Under-17, Under-23 & full international

#### Career history:

SEASON	CLUB	MATCHES	GOALS
15/16	Mamelodi Sundowns	2	1
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>

Correct as at 14/08/2015. League and Cup matches only. Charity games and friendlies not included.

that sometimes some people doubt their own abilities, but I believe in myself. I know what I can do and what I can offer a club like Sundowns.

#### Is it right to say you are now Botswana's biggest star?

[Laughing] That does not matter for me because whatever I do, I always do it with all my heart because I love football. Football is my life. My mind is not focused on being the biggest star.

#### What really brought you to Sundowns?

It is down to the fact that I wanted to showcase my talent on a bigger platform, at a more ambitious club and in a new environment. Here we have plenty quality players from different countries and being around quality players with international experience will help improve my game in many ways. My ambitions are bigger because I am now around players with bigger ambitions.

#### With the kind of quality Sundowns has, do you know how you are going to be used; what role will you play?

Before I signed, the coach spoke to me. Before we opened for pre-season I met him so that he could help me understand the culture of the club and how they want to play this season and how he wants to use me. He hasn't really mentioned any specific role that he wants me to play because I am a player capable of fitting into different positions. Whenever I am given an opportunity in any position that he wants me to play, I will aim to deliver.

#### Players with a profile similar to yours have failed to progress at the Downs ...

It is all about the belief because you cannot predict the future ... you must know that there will always be challenges along the way. It all depends on how I take those challenges, but I am always positive.

#### Do you honestly believe that Sundowns can win the League this season?

I cannot predict that, but our aim is to win all the games that we play, taking each game as it comes. KO



► **Full name:** Mogakolodi Ngele ► **Born:** 6/10/90 in Gaborone, Botswana ► **Previous clubs:** Uniao Flamengo Santos, Township Rollers (Botswana) ► **PSL Debut:** Platinum Stars 3 Moreka Swallows 1 (PSL, 12/8/12) ► **Full Debut:** Ajax Cape Town 4 Platinum Stars 1 (31/8/12) ► **First goal:** Platinum Stars 4 Free State Stars 0 (27/10/12) ► **Honours:** Botswana international, 2013 Telkom Cup winner, 2013 MTN8 winner

#### Career history:

SEASON	CLUB	MATCHES	GOALS
12/13	Platinum Stars	26 (+3 sub)	10
13/14	Platinum Stars	20 (+9 sub)	10
14/15	Platinum Stars	16 (+9 sub)	5
15/16	Mamelodi Sundowns	(1 sub)	0
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>62</b>	<b>25</b>

Correct as at 14/08/2015. League and Cup matches only. Charity games and friendlies not included.

# RISING TO TH

Brighton Mhlongo is continuing the work of Senzo Meyiwa. Lovemore Moyo reports.



A year ago Brighton Mhlongo had a single match to his name and was content as an understudy on the Orlando Pirates bench, providing cover to a flourishing Senzo Meyiwa.

But the tragic passing of Meyiwa in October 2014 meant Mhlongo faced the sudden responsibility of elevation to first-choice goalkeeper; a doubly difficult responsibility as Mhlongo was close to Meyiwa and had to put aside his mourning and step up to do his late friend's job.

"It is always emotional because I had known Senzo for 11 years and he was like a brother to me. We were close, really close," Mhlongo says.

"You wouldn't even say that we were competing because he taught me a lot. He would often tell me 'your chance to shine will come' and I always think about those words. I always want to make sure I don't disappoint him."

Understandably, many believed Mhlongo would not cope with the demands of replacing a man who was performing at his peak. And it was no surprise when Siyabonga Mpontshane joined from Platinum Stars in January, and Felipe Ovono arrived at the end of last season.

But Mhlongo has let his performances do the talking, missing just one game due to injury since replacing Meyiwa.

"It has been difficult for me, but I've stood firm," he says. "Even now, it is still not easy as nothing is done yet. Nothing is complete. It has been tough."

Like Meyiwa before him, Mhlongo has stood out in difficult CAF matches, proving what a good shot-stopper he is away to AC Leopards, then making a bold statement in Tunisia against CS Sfaxien. And his form is the prime reason Pirates again won the Carling

Black Label Cup.

"Mentally, I have grown. I no longer see myself as an entry-level player," he says.

"At first it was about filling the void, filling the shoes and all those kind of things. But now I am saying I want to be my own man ... be Brighton Mhlongo. Since I started thinking like that, things have started working out for me."

"But there is plenty of room to improve. So I must keep taking it one step at a time. I just want to keep on playing and enjoy it along the way."

With Mhlongo on guard, Pirates are on the verge of reaching the semi-finals of the CAF Confederations Cup, the first South African club to do so in the competition.

"We are aiming higher," he

***"I want to be my own man now ... be Brighton Mhlongo."***

# THE CHALLENGE

says. "We have told ourselves that since we reached the 2013 Champions League Final, we must do the same in the Confederations Cup.

"The chairman [Irvin Khoza] always emphasises the history behind all that we do. We still have in mind what the '95 team achieved, and we also want to build a legacy.

"I like it when I hear people talk about Africa, and they mention Pirates. It is nice that even people as far away as Tunisia recognise us.

"We are driven by this, and by the unity we have as players. Even under difficult circumstances we are there for each other."

Mhlongo has a new challenge of course, as the knee injury sustained in the opening match of the season has opened the way for Ovono – but as we have seen, he is not afraid of difficult challenges. **KO**

## Fantastic four

PIRATES head coach Eric Tinkler says he has "four fantastic goalkeepers".

Felipe Ovono, signed from Deportivo Mongomo, was a star at the most recent Afcon; Siyabonga Mpontshane has stepped in when Brighton Mhlongo was injured . . . and the fourth?

"There is one boy you don't know of. He is injured at the moment. He is young and he is extremely talented," Tinkler smiles.

"Brighton, we all know, is growing in leaps and bounds week on week. And Ovono is a fantastic keeper; confident, tactically very good and very experienced for a 22-year-old."

## 'Neymar' not here for the ladies



## Felipe Ovono tells Ernest Fakude he is gunning for another star for Pirates

**KICK OFF:** You did well during the Africa Cup of Nations, which resulted in interest from teams in Europe. Why did you choose to play in South Africa?

**OVONO:** I wanted to play professional football first in Africa before going to Europe. The League in Guinea is not that good and I wanted to gain more experience. I prepared well for that tournament because I have always wanted to play outside Equatorial Guinea. This was an opportunity to market myself.

**Was there any other interest from South Africa?**

Yes – but I am not sure about the names. I have followed Pirates because they play in Africa. When my manager mentioned Pirates I was excited. I didn't think twice. The League here is good, and there is tough competition – that's

why I came to play for Pirates.

**Can you help Pirates put another star on their jersey?**

I believe I can – I want to do that!

**You speak French, as does Issa Sarr. How has he helped you settle?**

I stay with Issa, and he told me about life here and what to do and not to do. He has warned me about the bad side of life in South Africa and urged me look after myself and concentrate on my football.

**But what about the beautiful ladies in South Africa?**

Yes, they are beautiful, but I am not here for ladies! I am here to live the life of a professional, not for social things.

**When will you bring your family here to join you?**

My fiancée is in Equatorial Guinea with our two beautiful daughters. I'm not ready to bring them . . . I'm concentrating on my job with Pirates.

**Your English has improved ... is your roommate Tendai Ndoro helping you?**

Yes! Ndoro can't speak French and Spanish and the only way we can communicate is through English. As a goalkeeper I must communicate with my defence and it is important to try and learn English as fast as possible.

**Some Pirates fans compare you to the late Senzo Meyiwa ...**

The news of Senzo's passing touched me a lot because I am a goalkeeper and followed his career. It is an honour that the fans compare me to Senzo, and great motivation.

**Why do the players call you 'Neymar'?**

Ha, ha, ha – it was Ndoro! [Ndoro cuts in: 'He was busy trying to cut his hair with a razor and said he wanted a hairstyle like Neymar!'] **KO**



# NDORO RATED BY COACH TEBZA



ORLANDO Pirates beat off the challenge from Mamelodi Sundowns to sign highly-rated Zimbabwean striker Tendai Ndoro from Mpumalanga Black Aces. Now the 27-year-old has to force his way into the Buccaneers line-up.

He has an important ally in his mission to impress – assistant coach Teboho Moloi.

"Coach Tebza always tells me that I remind him of Gilbert Mushangazikhe and says that he hopes I can achieve what he did in South Africa. If a coach like Tebza can recognise and compare you with players he played with or coached, then you feel inspired," Ndoro says.

Zimbabwean international Mushangazikhe was a prolific goalscorer for Manning Rangers and later Pirates, and will be a tough act to follow.

"I don't want to make promises and say I am ready to emulate others' success, but

I am ready to continue from where they left off," he says.

Ndoro was the top goalscorer in Zimbabwe, but has some way to go before he reaches that mark in South Africa.

He acknowledges that "the type of play in South Africa is different from Zimbabwe" and that he has left Aces for a club with yet another style of play, but says: "It is up to me to adjust, to settle down as soon as possible. I am confident in my abilities and believe Pirates will provide me with the platform to score more goals this season.

"As a striker you always like to play for a team that creates chances and I like the system at Pirates, playing from defence through to the strike-force," he says. "I believe I will fit in and I hope to score many goals for the club.

"I joined Pirates aware of the challenge awaiting me.

Gabuza has been scoring lately, not only with Pirates but also Bafana Bafana. Majoro and Kermit have scored crucial goals for the team. I am here to add on top of what they have already been doing. I believe competition brings the best out of everyone and I am ready to fight for my position."

And, while his ambition is now "to win everything that is on offer with Pirates this season," Ndoro has a parting message for Aces fans, stressing that reports circulating that he tried to force his way out of the club are untrue.

"I played with my whole heart at Aces and the club treated me well so I could never complain about anything or force my way out. They gave me their full blessing to join Pirates and I will always be grateful to Aces."

By Ernest Fakude

## INTRODUCING → Sphamandla Dlamini (University of Pretoria)

### Learning to strike in rugby boots

UNIVERSITY of Pretoria striker Sphamandla Dlamini is confident he'll follow in the footsteps of his homeboy May Mahlangu and secure a place in the national team, before moving overseas in the near future.

Born and bred in Secunda, Dlamini is climbing the ladder to stardom after signing his first professional contract with AmaTuks and receiving a call-up to the Under-23 national team.

The 21-year-old impressed the club's scouts during an SAB Under-21 tournament played in Soshanguve in June, winning the Player of the Tournament and Golden Boot awards.

"I was happy to sign with

AmaTuks," Dlamini says. "There were a few PSL teams that were interested, including Free State Stars – I trained with them before we went to the Under-23 camp – but I think I made the right decision.

"I got time to think hard during the national team camp when we went to play in Zimbabwe. When I came back, I had already made the decision to join AmaTuks."

Dlamini, a talented all-rounder, could not afford soccer boots, but soon came up with a solution.

"I played rugby at Secunda High School, and they used to provide us with boots – I used to take them with me, and use them

on the soccer field," he says.

A talented flyhalf, Dlamini also excelled in athletics and has medals on show in his cabinet at home.

"Last year I had to make up my mind whether I would continue to play other sports or concentrate on soccer – I chose soccer."

During those formative years, Mahlangu played a big role in Dlamini's early success.

"I trained with May with a Castle League team in Secunda called Remember FC. He gave us many motivational talks. I then moved to Zone Navo, but it remains my dream to follow on what May has achieved," he says.

The striker is happy to have a



new mentor now in AmaTuks club captain, Tebogo Monyai. "He is always speaking to me and always covers my back. He is a legend in the club and someone the youngsters can look up to," he says.

By Ernest Fakude

# Brazilian questions Papic tactics



BRAZILIAN goalkeeper coach Milton Nienov says he left Polokwane City because he did not share Kosta Papic's coaching philosophy.

According to Nienov, Papic focused too heavily on offensive play that defensive work was neglected and the goalkeepers were "left at the mercy of the opposition".

City leaked goals heavily last season, conceding 66 goals in 32 games played in all competitions and keeping just four clean sheets all season.

"When you have differences with the principal coach's philosophy you have absolutely no choice but to leave," Nienov says.

"Papic is different to me in the way that I believe matches should be approached. When you don't give much care to your defence, it means goalkeepers are always exposed as the last line."

"If the team concedes 66 goals that gives the impression that I am not doing my job as goalkeeper coach. For goalkeepers not to concede so many goals, they need to be protected."

"Papic would rather win 5-4 than 1-0, but I prefer to see balance in attacking and defending," Nienov adds.

By Lovemore Moyo

## forthercord

### Ajax Cape Town

- The Urban Warriors have promoted 19-year-old Justin Jacobus to the first team.
- Youth international defender Ayabulela Konqobe (formerly Maqwaka) has moved to AmaZulu on a season-long loan.
- Journeyman Zambian midfielder Clifford Mulenga has decided to head home to join Zesco United.

### Bidvest Wits

- The club has promoted seven players to the first team: Tshidiso Monamadi, Nkosinathi Sibeko, Siya Mose, Lukhuli Mduli, Yussuf Jappie, Saki Ncwadi and Phakamani Mahlambi.
- Former national Under-20 striker Thulani Ngcepe has been given an opportunity to resurrect his career with the Clever Boys.
- Portuguese striker Joaquim Lupeta has signed from Vitória Setúbal.

### Bloemfontein Celtic

- The club has brought in enterprising midfielder Kabelo Mahlasela from Royal Eagles, who will start off with the club's reserve team.
- Duncan Lechesa is the new head of development at the club.

### Chippa United

- The club is unhappy at George Akpabio's departure to Turkish club Yeni Malatyaspor as a free agent. The Nigerian striker had apparently made a verbal agreement to stay with Chippa.

### Free State Stars

- The club has re-signed Sthembiso Ngcobo on a one-year deal; he is a direct replacement to Ghana forward Abdul Basit Adam who has joined Turkish club Giresunspor.
- Ea Lla Koto have signed Felix Obada, who was last at Swallows.

### Golden Arrows

- Andile Fikizolo has returned for a second spell on loan from SuperSport United.

- Bidvest Wits forward Ryan Chapman has joined Arrows on loan having spent last season at SuperSport.

### Jomo Cosmos

- Ezenkosi missed out on signing Siyabonga Nomvete when he veteran renewed his contract with NFD side Moroka Swallows.
- Veteran wingback Sipho Mngomezulu has signed from Swallows.

### Kaizer Chiefs

- Goalkeeper Reyaad Pieterse's CV is being circulated in Europe with the hope of moving him when his contract expires at the end of June. With the return of Itumeleng Khune to the club, Pieterse is most likely to spend the season as a back-up.
- Veteran midfielder Josta Dladla – whose contract was not renewed at the end of June – will play for Moroka Swallows in the NFD.
- Mandla Masango has signed for Randers in Denmark. He had been keeping in shape at Shumba Football Academy, which plays in the Soweto Football Academy League.

### Mamelodi Sundowns

- Belgian goalkeeper Glenn Verbauwhede remains contracted to the club after the option on his contract was exercised in May.
- The club has agreed to release Xolani Mdaki and he is set for NFD club Vasco da Gama.
- Defender Ramahlwe Mphahlele is the new club captain.

### Maritzburg United

- Kenyan international defender Brian Onyango has signed.
- The club has been pressing for the services of two Sundowns players, Kwanda Mngonyama and Siyabulela Shai.

### MP Black Aces

- The club has added a number of youngsters to their ranks: goalkeeper Mbulelo Ngqobe, Sifiso Molefe, Kgomoetsi Koena, Stevo Malatji, Thabo Nodada, Alessandro

Venditti and Judas Moseamedi.

### Orlando Pirates

- Lehlogonolo Masalesa faces a club DC appearance after using obscene language against match officials while on the bench during the MTN8 quarter-final defeat to Ajax.
- Defender Mbongeni Gumede has been loaned out to AmaZulu.

### Platinum Stars

- Malawian forward Robin Ngalande has signed on loan from Bidvest Wits.

### Polokwane City

- Former AmaZulu defender Carlington Nyadombo has joined on a one-year deal.
- Midfielder Maxwell Molala has joined Black Leopards following his surprise departure from the club at the end of the past season.
- Club boss Johnny Mogaladi has promised to buy Puleng Tlolane a car for finishing as Rise and Shine's top scorer with 11 goals last season. The player has his eyes on a Polo GTI.

### SuperSport United

- Former Bafana Bafana midfielder MacBeth Sibaya has been linked with a move to the club to take up the role of second assistant. Sibaya comes in highly recommended by Gordon Iglesund, who worked with him at Moroka Swallows.
- The club has registered Zimbabwean striker Kingston Nkhatha as a non-native following the issuing of his permanent residence permit. Nkhatha qualifies for permanent residency having been in the country since 2007.
- Kaitano Tembo has been named assistant coach following the departure of Serame Letsoaka to Golden Arrows.

### University of Pretoria

- Former youth international Bongani 'Junior' Nyathi has joined the following the non-renewal of his contract at Platinum Stars.



# SANKARA AIMS FOR STARS



FREE State Stars have made a habit of using their wide scouting network to recruit wisely from West Africa in recent years – especially bringing in quality central defenders.

Ghana international Jonathan Mensah, Nigerian defender Soriola Gege and Sadate Ouro Akoriko from Togo headline the class of defenders that Stars have been

able to bring to the PSL, with Robert Sankara being their most recent find from further up the continent.

In Sankara – an Ivoirian-born Burkina Faso defender – they have found a dependable centre-back who has already made his presence felt in the season he has spent here. He was justifiably handed the Chairman's Award by Stars recently following a solid

26-match shift last term.

Though Ea Lla Koto had to fight to escape relegation last season, Sankara was easily recognisable for his composure at the back.

"The football in this country is high intensity and the PSL is very good, which can only help me improve and become a better player," he says.

The 30-year-old feels now that he is familiar with the

PSL, his second season will be even better. Stars endured a difficult campaign in 2014/15.

"Last season I did well and helped the team survive and I really think I made a good contribution. I still want to give more and now that I have adjusted, I will do even better this season," he says.

"I want to give my best and make this team move up as

high as possible, while making sure that we seriously challenge for one of the trophies available. I believe that with the type of players we have, we will definitely do much better than last season. Trust me on this – we will challenge for a trophy this season,” he says.

Sankara was brought in last season as a direct replacement for Akoriko, who moved to AmaZulu, and he settled in right away with polished displays.

“If you are moving to a league with better facilities then adapting should not be an issue,” he says.

“Things are just the way I want them to be – plus I am glad to be in an environment where my efforts are appreciated.”

Sankara also makes a plea to the Burkina Faso national team selectors not to ignore the PSL when monitoring players for the national team.

“It is not easy to break into the team if you play in Africa. The selectors seem to be biased towards players in Europe; they just prefer Europe, even though some of the leagues there are not the best.

“They seem to think that as long as you are in Europe then that is your licence to the national team.

“The selectors don’t know how good a league this is,” says Sankara, who has won just two caps for The Stallions.

Sankara was born in Côte d’Ivoire and only went to Burkina Faso for the first time in 2009 after being called up for national duty.

“I attended school in Côte d’Ivoire and played all my junior football there, through to my time at Stade d’Abidjan, ASEC Mimosas and Denguele Sports. After playing there I went to play for Al Hilal in Sudan before coming here,” he says.

**By Lovemore Moyo**

## SPOTLIGHT |

Tintswalo Tshabalala (Platinum Stars)

**Name:** Tinstwalo Edward Tshabalala  
**Nickname:** Scorpion/  
 Koppido  
**Born:** 3/9/82 in Chiawelo,  
 Soweto  
**Lovelife:** Dating  
**Previous clubs:** Jo'burg  
 City, Senaoane Gunners  
 (both amateur), PJ Stars,  
 Alexandra United, Black  
 Leopards  
**Car:** VW Golf VI GTi  
**Cellphone:** Samsung S5



### ON THE PITCH

**You debuted in the PSL aged 29 back in the 2011/12 season at Black Leopards – why did it take so long?**

I did not have any connections to get me into the professional clubs – I was just a random guy from the township. I also never thought that I would make a career out of football. It was only when my friend Jabu Maluleke started playing professionally that I realised that I could also take a step up.

**Who would make up your five-a-side team of left-footed PSL players?**

Tsotsi [Mogakolodi] Ngele, Masibusane Zongo, Tsepiso Masilela ... me! Then up-front I will have Collins Mbesuma providing the goals.

**What is the funniest thing a referee has ever said to you?**

I will never forget Victor Hlungwani – we were playing against Sundowns in a tough game and after having complained so much to him he said; ‘I wonder what will happen to you if they make you captain, you are already making so much noise.’ He spoke to me nicely in Shangaan and after that I laughed and decided to give the guy a break.

**Would you ever consider going back to Leopards if they won promotion?**

Most definitely because I feel I still

**I would kindly beg my boss to shorten my shift to about four hours.**

owe David Thidiela a huge thank-you. I remember they needed another player to make up two teams of 11 and they asked Jabu if his friend (me!) could play. Though he knew what I could do, he just told them they must try me and see for themselves. The rest is history.

### OFF THE PITCH

**Do you get attracted to the word ‘sale’ when you go to the mall?**

Most definitely – especially with fashion because I am in love with clothes. If any of my favourite shops puts up that red and white poster I will not hesitate. Normally I like exclusive things and luckily I know where to go.

**Have you ever been underground, seeing that you play for a mining team?**

[Laughing] You ask as if you know! There was a day when we were supposed to go, but the lift wasn’t working properly. I think it was a blessing in disguise for me because I fear going underground the same way that I fear swimming.

**Have you ever imagined yourself working at a ‘normal’ job?**

A 9-5 shift is way too long for me – if I work that long I will sleep on duty! I would kindly beg my boss to shorten my shift to about four hours.

**What are your thoughts on circumcision?**

I think it is a wise decision to get circumcised as it reduces the risk of getting sexually-transmitted diseases. I believe that if you want to get circumcised, just do it the safe way by going to the doctor instead of going to the mountains. Some of the people who go to the mountains don’t come back alive.

**Do you know all the colours on the flag, and can you sing the national anthem?**

Black, white, blue, red, yellow and green are the colours of the flag. For the anthem, the only part that I struggle with is verse that is sung in Afrikaans. I am proudly South African and I take interest in making sure that I am as well informed as possible.

**By Lovemore Moyo**

### ONE-TWOS

**Contract or Prepaid?**

**Contract**

**Trace or Channel 0?**

**Channel 0**

**Diesel or G-Star?**

**Diesel, obvious!**

**DJ Spectacular or DJ Naves?**

**Naves, he is my friend**

**Maponya or Southgate?**

**Maponya**



Mbabane Swallows won the King's Cup in Swaziland after beating Royal Leopards 4-2 on penalties following a 1-1 draw in the Final. Leopards and Swallows reached the Final after knocking out South African giants Orlando Pirates and Kaizer Chiefs in the semi-finals.

## WORDS

### On Masibusane Zongo

"We're going to let every little child know that when you do tricks, you win Man of the Match." – **Pitso Mosimane**

"I heard Pitso saying in Europe and what-what, but this is not Europe, it is South Africa. If the boy wants to shibobo somebody, he must shibobo." – **Jomo Sono**  
**disagrees with Mosimane**  
 "Any action that seeks to humiliate or bring the game of football into disrepute is unsporting behaviour and therefore a cautionable offence." – **Former ref Jerome Damon's take on 'showboating'**

## Good month for ...

### Mbombela United

Under captain Bednog Manyike (pictured), Mbombela were crowned ABC Motsepe League champions after beating Mthatha Bucks 2-1 in the Play-off Final. Both sides gained promotion to the National First Division after topping their groups.



## Bad month for ...

### Anton Groenewald

The organiser of the Cape Town Cup arranged for Crystal Palace, Sporting Lisbon, Ajax Cape Town and SuperSport United to face off in a weekend tournament. The crowds stayed away, and the whole debacle cost the city over R35-million. Groenewald resigned.



### PALOOKA



Brilliant Khuzwayo, caught driving at 166km/h in KwaZulu-Natal. Slow it down, Brilliant!



### PLAYMAKER



Thabo Rakhalo, who has proven that he is much more than a 'showboater', scoring home and away against CS Sfaxien in CAF competition.

## Also last month

- The match between Orlando Pirates and SuperSport United is stopped after the floodlights failed. The match resumes the next day.
- Tefu Mashamaite joins Swedish side BK Hacken, while Mandla Masango signs for Danish club Randers FC.
- South Africa are drawn to face Angola in their World Cup preliminary qualifier.
- Benedict Vilakazi announces his retirement. The 33-year-old last played for Botswana side Notwane FC.
- City Press reports that Tokyo Sexwale might run for Fifa president, although he is currently ineligible as candidates must have served on their own FA for two years.

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## BEST OF THE BEST | Thabo Mooki

**Kaizer Chiefs legend THABO MOOKI reflects on his many years in the game, and shares some of his favourite memories with KICK OFF readers.**

### Best moment of your football career ...

It was the trophies – especially the Rothmans Cup – that created a lot of hype in the late '90s. I played in both finals against Mamelodi Sundowns, a tough team, and I was happy to be on the winning side. Winning the Mandela Cup [CAF Cup Winners' Cup] and the League titles are also unforgettable moments in my football career!

### Best coach ...

It is without a doubt Philippe Troussier. He was more than just a coach to us. He liked young players and treated everyone the same, but would quickly drop you if you showed an attitude. His planning was thorough and his training sessions were enjoyable. He helped us a lot in terms of technique and tactical awareness. Troussier would also sit down with you one-on-one and ask you about your family and the situation at home, understanding that most of us were from disadvantaged backgrounds.

### Best roommate ...

It has to be Brian Baloyi. 'Spider' was a funny guy, always playing pranks. I remember once flying to Durban and he was teasing an old white man sitting in front of us – in Sotho. Later the old man turned around and said, 'Hey nina I ndiyaniwza ukuthi nthini ngam' (Hey you, I can hear what you are saying about me).

### Best pitch ever played on ...

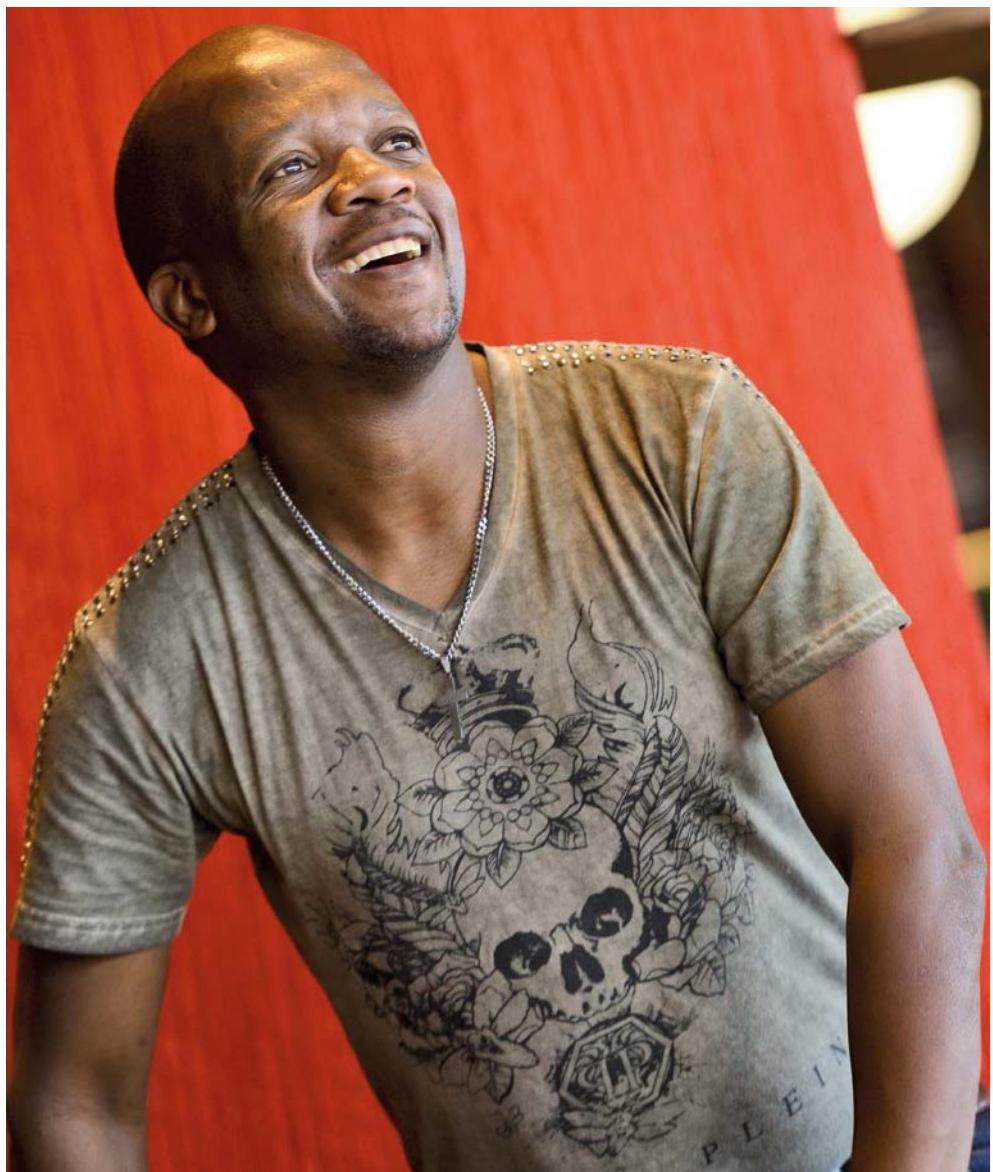
Johannesburg Stadium – the pitch there was superb. I think I played some of my best games there.

### Best goal scored ...

I think all my long-range shots, but the goal against Cape Town Spurs in 1998 at Athlone has to be the best. I also scored a beauty against Orlando Pirates, giving poor Williams Okpara no chance [smiling].

### Best opponent played against ...

There is no particular player that I can single out – no disrespect to my opponents, but no-one could touch me when I had the ball. I remember when I turned Thabo Mngomeni upside down



– he complained after the game: 'T-Boss, why did you embarrass me like this?' I told him I was doing my job!

### Best midfield partners ...

I enjoyed my partnership with Thabang Lebese. I also enjoyed playing with Wellington Manyathi, even though it was during the twilight of his career. And Doctor Khumalo – he was an orchestrator on the pitch and he directed us and controlled the pace of the game.

### Best player ever seen ...

Zinedine Zidane was the best. He was very skilful and made football look easy. Today it is Messi – he is the best footballer in the world today and should not be compared to anyone, including Ronaldo!

### Best DJ in camp ...

Brian Baloyi taught me a lot about music. He loves music and you would find him listening to a musician that we had never even heard of.

### Best joker ...

Steve Lekolela! There was never a dull moment whenever Steve was around. Even today when we meet, Steve makes me laugh. Edward 'Magenta' Motale was funny too.

### Best game ever played in ...

The nine-goal thriller against Cape Town Spurs at Athlone Stadium which we won 5-4.

By Luthando Zibeko

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Lunga Shabalala says, "Why buy loads of different face care products when you can get healthier skin with NIVEA MEN Face Creme? It's easy – I just twist open the tin, dip in my finger and apply a small amount all over my face and neck. It makes looking after my skin quick and easy, and I only need one product!" You've got the right threads, now get the skin to match.

### 3 PROTECT YOUR FACE

You care about your clothes and your shoes, but what about your face? Protect your face from the dark marks and patches caused by the sun. Try the NIVEA MEN EVEN TONE FACE CREME variant with UV filters to protect your skin from sun damage.

Take control of your skin because you only get one chance to make a good first impression.

NIVEA MEN  
FACE CREME



# I WAS NOT GREEDY – MASHA

FORMER Kaizer Chiefs skipper Tefu Mashamaite has broken his silence over his perceived acrimonious departure from the club.

The 30-year-old parted ways with Amakhosi at the end of June when his contract expired, and despite speculation to the contrary, Mashamaite insists there is no bad blood between himself and the club's management. He insists the two parties simply did not agree terms on a new contract.

"That's the myth I want to debunk. I think Itu [Khune] wanted what he wanted, Mandla [Masango] wanted what he wanted and I wanted what I wanted; but it was like, 'Ah these people are greedy and they want so much money'.

"That is not true. I was only asking for something that will make me survive," Mashamaite tells KICK OFF.

'Masha' – who started 129 matches in all competitions and scored 12 goals over four seasons at Chiefs – feels he was justified in his demands, especially after his award-winning form last season.

"I just want to clarify this and say, for me, it was never about money. I was never after crazy money. I felt what I was asking for was market-related and I felt I deserved to get



Tefu Mashamaite enjoying his evening after being crowned 2014/15 KICK OFF Footballer of the Season

what I asked for. They couldn't give me what I wanted and I decided to move elsewhere," he says.

The Wits University BA graduate admits that it hurt to leave Naturena with the contract saga hanging over his head, rather than celebrating the success the team enjoyed after winning the League and MTN8.

"It was unfortunate that I didn't get to celebrate our achievements; all the talk about how greedy we were just spoilt everything. That was very unfortunate because I worked so hard, but I couldn't enjoy the moment.

"But I want to thank Chiefs and everyone associated with the club. It's been a great journey ... a kind of discovery for me. You have to grow up and think of what you need as an individual.

"To the supporters, I want to say thank you for your support and I hope you continue to follow my career," the KICK OFF Footballer of the Season says.

After a prospective move to the MLS fell through, the centre-back has signed a two-and-a-half-year deal with Swedish top-flight side BK Hacken.

"I feel I have achieved what I wanted to achieve in South Africa, so why not pick up a

challenge elsewhere?

"It is a chance to continue to learn, to play regularly, and obviously it is a new environment. There might be a culture shock here and there, but I think I'm able to adapt – the quicker I adapt the better. It is about having a positive mindset and I will have to give my all at training to convince the coaches that I'm worth it," Mashamaite says.

"I know people in South Africa might say 'he is 30 and he's almost done', but I have other ideas. I believe that if I take care of myself, I still have six years in me."

**By Tiyani wa ka Mabasa**

## Why Mthatha Bucks is not Umtata Bucks

THEY sport the logo on their shirts and they play in Mthatha, but new National First Division club Mthatha Bucks are not the Imbabala of old.

The club that won promotion to the NFD in July is based in Mthatha, but are not the old Umtata Bush Bucks which is still run by Sturu Pasiya, and toils away in the Safa regional league in East London.

When this club was relegated from the Premiership in 2006, one of their directors was an attorney named Philisa

Mnqandi. Upon relegation, the club was liquidated – later to be relaunched by Pasiya – and Mnqandi left.

In 2007 he bought the Castle League status of Happy Brothers FC and launched a club called Mthatha Bucks in the old Transkei capital. He later relinquished leadership of Mthatha Bucks to Simthembile Ntlantsana, who is now the major shareholder.

"I was part of Bush Bucks when it was relegated with Sturu Pasiya."

Mnqandi confirms.

"We wanted a team that would represent Mthatha and that is why I bought Happy Brothers FC and renamed them Mthatha Bucks.

"It took some years to build the club to where it is now – four years in the Castle League and five years in the Vodacom League [now ABC Motsepe League]," Mnqandi says.

Mthatha Bucks finished top of Group B in the ABC Motsepe promotion Play-

offs, and though they lost to Mbombela United in the Play-off Final, they were promoted to the NFD as runners-up.

"We have a three-year vision," Mnqandi says. "Firstly we need to make sure we don't get relegated in our first season; then from there we can build a team for the future. The people of Mthatha want a team of their own that will represent the Transkei region with pride."

**By Chris Maqashu**

## Back to school for AmaZulu

AMAZULU have invested heavily in their youth in an all-new development programme in partnership with Durban-based Glenwood High School.

The club has enrolled their entire Under-17 team into the school, with a specifically-designed programme for the youngsters to balance both their academic and sporting commitments.

"The boys are given time in the morning to train as they are part of the school's elite academy, where all the school's elite sports players train in the morning from 8-10am. They then go to class until 3pm, before their afternoon practice sessions," Usuthu's U-17 coach

Samukelo Ngubane says.

"It's definitely helping us in that we are able to train more regularly, compared to previous years where we only had two training sessions per week. It benefits us in that we get extra training time and are able to use the school's great facilities, while our whole team is together all the time."

Usuthu have already started reaping the rewards as their U-17 side were victorious in the KZN leg of the Engen Under-17 Knockout Challenge, beating local rivals Golden Arrows 2-1 in July's Final.

By Fabio De Dominicis



## Copa Coca adds fizz

TWO South African teenagers, Notha Ngcobo and Mokhethi Phali, were recently invited to attend the Copa Coca-Cola International Camp in Germany, enjoying a six-day trip full of training sessions, workshops and guidance from 1990 World Cup-winner Pierre Littbarski and coach Hansi Flick, assistant coach of Germany's 2014 World Cup-winning squad.

Ngcobo, who is in the SA

Under-17 national squad, relished the opportunity to work with Flick ahead of the Under-17 World Cup in Chile later this year.

Ngcobo and Phali represented 'Team Leipzig', winning the eight-a-side tournament – effectively the 'Copa Coca-Cola International Cup'. Phali was awarded 'The Heart' – the player who showed the most passion for his team.

By Chad Klate

## SECRETS OF THE STARS

### 10 things you did not know about Bidvest Wits midfielder Daine Klate



1 At the age of five, Klate broke his left femur when a car accidentally bumped into him. Today he has one of the best left feet in local football.

2 Daine was a promising young cricketer; a batsman, wicket-keeper and school captain.

3 Klate was forced to play soccer for a local club by his primary school teacher, despite the fact that he preferred cricket.

4 Klate chose to pursue a career in football at the age of 13 after he was successful following trials for the Transnet Soccer School of Excellence in 1999.

5 Daine was one of the star attractions at the 2002 Metropolitan Under-19 Premier Cup in Cape Town. The School of Excellence lost to Hellenic in the Final.

6 Klate has represented South Africa at Under-17, U-20, U-23 and full international level, and played 13 times for Bafana Bafana after making his senior debut in 2006 under Stuart Baxter.

7 Orlando Pirates tried to sign him from SuperSport United in 2009, but the club was reluctant to let Klate go.

8 After winning the MTN8 with Pirates in 2012, Klate handed his winner's ring to Benni McCarthy, who was suspended after being sent off in the semi-final.

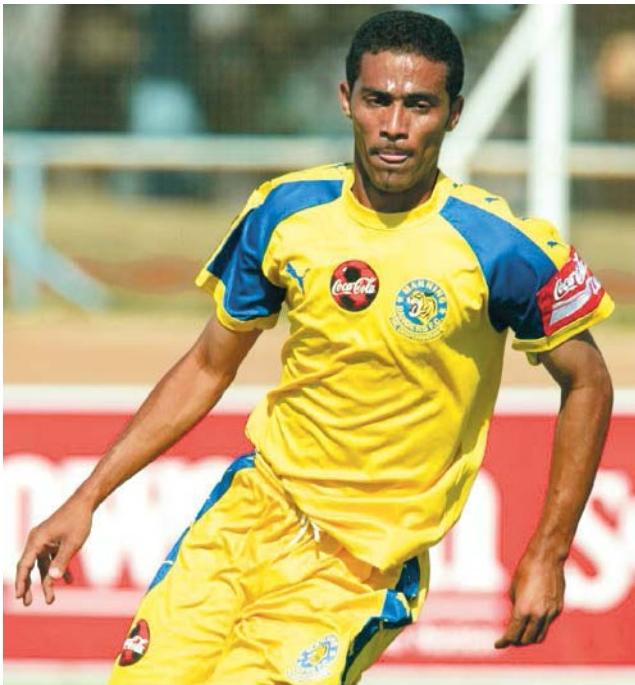
9 Klate and his wife Stacey own a Montessori pre-school in Midrand for kids aged two to six.

10 Part of Klate's two-year deal with Wits is that he has been given a bursary to study a part-time Law Degree at the university.



## Where are they now? (Antonio 'Paulito' Trigo)

# ANTONIO 'PAULITO' TRIGO



Then and now – Trigo at Manning Rangers (left), at Sundowns, and today (below), as a Maximo pundit

MANNING Rangers might be defunct, but they were one of only two clubs from outside Gauteng to have won the PSL title – the other being Santos.

Along the way Rangers recruited wisely – Mozambican Antonio 'Paulito' Trigo was one such signing, recruited by Gordon Igesund in 1998.

Trigo went on to spend five years with The Mighty Maulers before he moved to Sundowns.

"Rangers was able to give the big teams from Jo'burg headaches," he recalls. "We didn't have big money, but we were able to fight for points in those earlier years as we had experienced players like Mark Davies, Grant Johnson and Bradley Muir who knew that we had to grind out results in Jo'burg. Those were soldiers and that is why we earned the respect of Jo'burg teams. I am proud to have been a part of such a team," he recalls.

Lanky in structure and blessed with an intelligent brain, the

former Mambas captain was unfortunate that his dream move to Sundowns at the start of the 2003/04 season eventually led to his premature retirement, following a groin injury that wouldn't heal.

That injury and a year-long wait for the issuing of his permanent residence permit restricted him to a mere four starts during his three years at Chloorkop.

"I think I should have actually moved to Sundowns much earlier instead of staying for so long at Rangers," he says. "Then when I got to Sundowns I had to wait a year for my citizenship papers, then after that injuries messed me up and by then my age didn't help my cause as I was almost 30."

"Though my time at Sundowns didn't work out, I don't regret my move there because they have always been my favourite team, and I still support them now."

"Even though Roger De Sa wanted to sign me at Bidvest Wits

afterwards (in 2007/08) I decided to quit because I couldn't train for two weeks in a row anymore due to this groin injury."

Unlike most footballers, going into retirement wasn't a worry for Trigo as he had the back-up of a job as an analyst on SuperSport's Portuguese channel Maximo, and interests in an import and export business back home.

He still works at the pay-per-view broadcaster. "Those days I had a busy schedule at SuperSport so I wasn't entirely dependent on football," says Trigo, who turns 39 in September.

"The problem with most players is that they have pride and are lazy which is why they want to hold on to football forever, even when the game doesn't need them anymore as players."

"Why not adjust your lifestyle and move on with life by getting yourself involved elsewhere? Football or sports in general is the only career where you end up being

referred to as an ex ... if you are a doctor or lawyer, you will remain that until you die. You don't hear of ex-doctors, so players must always be aware that their career will not last forever.

"Players need to stick that up their heads all the time and know that even Diego Maradona is now known as an ex-Argentina international and belongs in the past with people now more interested in Lionel Messi. Playing football will end, but your life will still have to continue, so always have something to back yourself up with."

"It is sad that some of the ex-professionals that I play with in the Masters League are jealous that the current generation is earning more money. Some of these ex-professionals think that their glory of the past must still feed their stomachs."

"I understand that most of these ex-professional footballers' bitterness is because they were broke and hopeless just a year after they got their last salary as players and

## NSL HISTORY

# The NSL is formed after a rebellion by the top clubs

In 1985, the League suffered a difficult birth following a rebellion against the NPSL's dictatorial boss, George Thabe.



now wish they could be the ones still playing and earning the big money

"But football owes no-one a favour and if you failed to respect your career, then you will have to deal with the consequences."

Besides his television job and business interests, Trigo also doubles up as Jomo Cosmos' Under-19 coach and holds a CAF B licence.

"I have had opportunities to go back home to coach top league teams, but I turned them down because I love working with the kids and my family is settled here in Johannesburg," he says.

By Lovemore Moyo



►Full name: Antonio Paulo Suaé Trigo ►Born: 3/9/76 in Angoche, Nampula province, Mozambique ►Former clubs:

Namuquela FC, Maxaquene Maputo (1993-96), Ferroviário Maputo (1996-98) (all Mozambique)

►Honours: Full Mozambique international, 1996 and 1997 Mozambican League winner

PSL Career record:

SEASON	CLUB	GAMES	GLS
98-03	Manning Rangers	108	7
03-06	Mamelodi Sundowns	4	0
<b>Totals:</b>		<b>112</b>	<b>7</b>

**JAN 10 1985** Kaizer Motaung, owner of Chiefs, hits out at a ruling that 10% of the gate for a charity match between Chiefs and Pirates, to honour Ace Ntsolengoe and Jomo Sono, will be deducted and given out to various administrative bodies. Reports have a powerful consortium of officials working to gain autonomy from the National Professional Soccer League, which falls under the control of the National Football Association (Sanfa).

**JAN 11** NPSL clubs demand that George Thabe cannot serve as chairman of both the NPSL and Sanfa (the fore-runner of Safa). They also insist he should not draw a salary for what are supposed to be honorary posts.

**JAN 13** A special emergency meeting of clubs is called, where Motaung calls for Thabe to "resign under the circumstances".

**JAN 15** The NPSL is to charge Motaung with bringing the League into disrepute. Similar charges are also considered against Ronnie Schloss of Wits University.

**JAN 18** Sanfa withdraw constitutional amendments, which would have given them veto power over the NPSL, but give beleaguered boss Thabe a unanimous vote of confidence.

**JAN 23** 15 of 16 Castle League clubs sign a petition demanding Thabe step down as chairman of the NPSL. Only Bloemfontein Celtic do not attach their signature, and only because of time pressure. They promise their support too. Motaung and Raymond Hack hand over the petition as well as a series of proposed constitutional amendments that will obliterate all the veto rights that Sanfa holds over the NPSL.

**JAN 28** The NPSL clubs meet again to re-affirm their affiliation to Sanfa as long as Thabe relinquishes the chairmanship. The



Cyril Kobus, Kaizer Motaung and Raymond Hack all played major roles in the new NSL

clubs also vote a motion of no confidence in the NPSL management committee for "abandoning the interests of the clubs who elected them", by siding with Thabe.

**JAN 29** Thabe rejects any offer of a compromise from the clubs. "Those who want to break away can do so," he says. Orlando Pirates chairman Sipho 'Sixty' Mali comes out in support of Thabe despite his club signing the petition against him.

**JAN 31** The Castle League clubs declare their independence from Sanfa.

**FEB 1** NPSL general-secretary Cyril Kobus throws his backing behind the new breakaway league. He is joined in his defection by NPSL management committee member Clarence Mlokoti of Chiefs.

**FEB 3** Only Swallows and a makeshift delegation from Pirates attend a meeting of the NPSL clubs called by Thabe, who says he will ask the government to ban the clubs from using municipal grounds.

**FEB 4** The clubs announce they will go independent on February 23 and take over

of the running of the Championship Championships tournament.

**FEB 9** SA Breweries announce they are to back the new league with a record R400 000 sponsorship.

**FEB 10** Thabe resigns as NPSL chairman in order "to try and restore unity in South African soccer."

**FEB 13** The autonomous NPSL clubs release a statement, saying their first priority is to seek unity at national level between Sanfa, the white-controlled Football Association of South Africa and the South African Soccer Federation in order to attempt to return to international football.

**FEB 19** The new name of the National Soccer League is formally constituted, with the Castle League made up of 18 clubs. The new organisation also commits to starting a national second division and opens a new office in Johannesburg's city centre.

- *Read about the 1985 season in next month's edition of KICK OFF.*

# WITS CHAMPIO

KICK OFF asks top media analysts to make their **predictions** for the **2015/16 season**.

## THABISO TEMA

(TV COMMENTATOR)

### Who will win the League?

Sundowns will be among the favourites – they have a balanced squad. The truth is only five teams can win: Chiefs, Pirates, Sundowns, SuperSport and Wits. Wits will be in the race and all will depend on whether Sibusiso Vilakazi stays or not.

### Who will win the Telkom Knockout?

You need to win four matches to win the Telkom, so I will give it to Kaizer Chiefs.

### Who will win the Nedbank Cup?

By the time it is played, Pirates won't have African commitments and this will give them a chance.

### Who will be relegated?

Chippa United are strong candidates and Jomo Cosmos too. But I think Maritzburg will go down; their squad is not impressive and their players won't last the entire season.

### Who will be the dark horses?

Golden Arrows made some good signings and could find themselves in the top eight.

### Who will be promoted from the NFD?

Swallows can come back up. Leopards choked last season, but will be contenders. But I tip Swallows for promotion.

### Which young player will likely impress?



Ups and downs – Kaizer Chiefs are tipped to retain their title, and Chippa United are one of the favourites for the drop

# NS, POLOKWANE CUP WINNERS?

Thabo Rakhale. So much has happened in the space of two seasons for him and he will be big for Bafana Bafana next season.

**Which player should get a move?**  
Rakhale needs to get out of the PSL, and let's see how Sibusiso Vilakazi does this season.

**MARK GLEESON**  
(COMMENTATOR, ANALYST)

**Who will win the League?**

Bidvest Wits, because Kaizer Chiefs, Mamelodi Sundowns and Orlando Pirates will be too inconsistent.

**Who will win the Telkom Knockout?**  
Polokwane City.

**Who will win the Nedbank Cup?**  
Sundowns – it will prove yet another consolation for failing to win the League.

**Who will be relegated?**

There are four or five weak teams ... I'd say University of Pretoria and Golden Arrows.

**Who will be the dark horse of the season?**

Black Aces – under Muhsin Ertugral they can get a top six finish.

**Who will be promoted from the NFD?**  
Moroka Swallows and AmaZulu.

**Which young player will likely impress this season?**

Riyaad Norodien – he has an unpredictability to his game which defenders have yet to figure out.

**Which player deserves (or badly needs) to get a move?**

Reyaad Pieterse, because he is too good to sit on the bench. He needs to play because he is a prospective Bafana Bafana number one.

**DANIEL MOTHOWAGAE**  
(CITY PRESS JOURNALIST)

**Who will win the League?**

Orlando Pirates. They have enough depth and their continental form should re-ignite their hunger to go for Premiership glory.

**Who will win the Telkom Knockout?**

Kaizer Chiefs. The Telkom Knockout seems to favour them, especially as it does not involve amateur sides that often stand in their way.

**Who will win the Nedbank Cup?**

Pirates. Like Chiefs in the Telkom, Pirates have a sweet tooth for this competition.

**Who will be relegated?**

Polokwane City. They won't get the lucky escape this time.

**Who will be the dark horses?**

SuperSport United. Gordon Igesund is the man who best knows how to use the Premiership points calculator.

**Who will be promoted from the NFD?**

Leopards are a far more experienced side than their competition.

**Which young player will likely impress this season?**

Riyaad Norodien – the bearded one has unfinished business from last season.

**Which player deserves (or badly needs) to get a move?**

Kwanda Mngonyama – he's just wasted not having a permanent home.

**ZANE MOOSA**  
(STUDIO ANALYST, EX-PRO)

**Who will win the League?**

The big three didn't have the best of starts, but the League title will be decided between them and Wits.

**Who will win the Telkom Knockout?**

It's difficult to say, but I will give it to Orlando Pirates.

**Who will win the Nedbank Cup?**

Bidvest Wits will be there because they will want to win something this season, but I think Kaizer Chiefs will win it.

**Who will be relegated?**

It will be between Chippa United, Cosmos and Maritzburg.

**Who will be the dark horses?**

I will give this one to Wits because they will surprise a lot of teams. Celtic signed a lot of players, but they do not have enough playmakers.

**Who will be promoted from the NFD?**

The Under-23 rule will make it difficult for everyone in National First Division.

**Which young player will likely impress this season?**

Keagan Dolly. He impressed me a lot during the Under-23 matches and if he stays fit he will impress a lot of people. He showed hunger and wants to do well this season.

**Which player should get a move?**

Dolly is good, but I think Riyaad Norodien deserves a chance to move abroad. There is also Siphelele Ntshangase from Black Leopards.

**KICK OFF'S PICKS**

**TIYANI WA KA MABASA** (CHIEF REPORTER)

**Who will win the League?**

Mamelodi Sundowns. Continuity is key in football and they haven't made wholesale changes for this season.

**Who will win the Telkom Knockout?**

Orlando Pirates. They lost in the semifinals to SuperSport United last season and I think they can go one better this time around.

**Who will win the Nedbank Cup?**

It is very difficult to say, but I will go with Bidvest Wits.

#### **Who will be relegated?**

Chippa United. If you look at the signings they have made, most don't inspire much confidence.

#### **Who will be the dark horses?**

Ajax Cape Town. Now that Roger de Sa is settled at the club, I expect Ajax to surprise a lot of people.

#### **Who will be promoted from the NFD?**

Teams with coaches with PSL experience – AmaZulu (Steve Barker), Santos (Zeca Marques), Milano United (Boebie Solomons) and Black Leopards (David Bright) – are the teams to look out for.

#### **Which young player will likely impress this season?**

I think Menzi Masuku can be considered young at 22 and I think he is very talented. **Which player should get a move to Europe?**

My wish is to see Rivaldo Coetzee move to Europe soon.

**ZOLA DODA** (SENIOR WRITER)

#### **Who will win the League?**

With Eric Tinkler in charge, Pirates have maintained continuity. He understands his players very well and will be able to rest them when required.

#### **Who will win the Telkom Knockout?**

Ajax Cape Town may not be strong enough to contend for the League title, but the team is formidable enough to win a cup this season.

#### **Who will win the Nedbank Cup?**

Bidvest Wits has enough depth to challenge for the League and a trophy, and the Nedbank Cup will be ideal.

#### **Who will be relegated?**

Free State Stars had a mediocre first half last season, but bounced back and survived. But this season, the team will have a mountain to climb and the departure of Daniel Cardoso will not help.

#### **Who will be the dark horses?**

Under Muhsin Ertugral, Black Aces will improve a lot.

#### **Who will be promoted from the NFD?**

Black Leopards. They were unlucky not to get promoted last term.

#### **Which young player will likely impress this season?**

Rivaldo Coetzee. If he stays injury-free, Coetzee will be a contender for the PSL Footballer of the Season award.

#### **Which player should get a move?**

Coetzee. Getting selected to the national



**Star man – Wits' Sibusiso Vilakazi will be key to their campaign, but will Pirates (below) have the legs to last the entire season after their CAF campaign?**



team at such a young age will help attract offers from European teams.

**RICHARD MAGUIRE** (EDITOR)

#### **Who will win the League?**

Last year I tipped Bidvest Wits and they let me down. The Big Three will cancel each other out, so I'm giving Wits another chance – don't drop me again Clever Boys.

#### **Who will win the Telkom Knockout?**

Kaizer Chiefs – they always win a cup, and Orlando Pirates will have bigger fish to fry in Africa.

#### **Who will win the Nedbank Cup?**

A big team like Pirates or Mamelodi Sundowns.

#### **Who will be relegated?**

Free State got away with it last season, and they might not make it this time. I like what they are trying to do at AmaTuks, but I think they'll struggle to avoid the drop. The Cosmos bus will be parked inside the safe zone – but

only just.

#### **Who will be the dark horses?**

Black Aces have shown potential, and I think Muhsin will improve them even more. Ajax will have a good season too.

#### **Who will be promoted from the NFD?**

Black Leopards and AmaZulu.

#### **Which young player will likely impress this season?**

Riyaad Norodien is itching to make a big impact after so long on the sidelines. Thabiso Rakhale is not 'young' but he is still something of a rookie – and he gets better with each game.

#### **Which player deserves (or badly needs) to get a move?**

Now that Itu Khune is back at Chiefs, Reyaad Pieterse must go to a club where he can play every week.

#### **HAVE YOUR SAY**

Can you do better than the experts? Mail us and we'll publish your predictions. **KO**



# THE CHINO UPDATE

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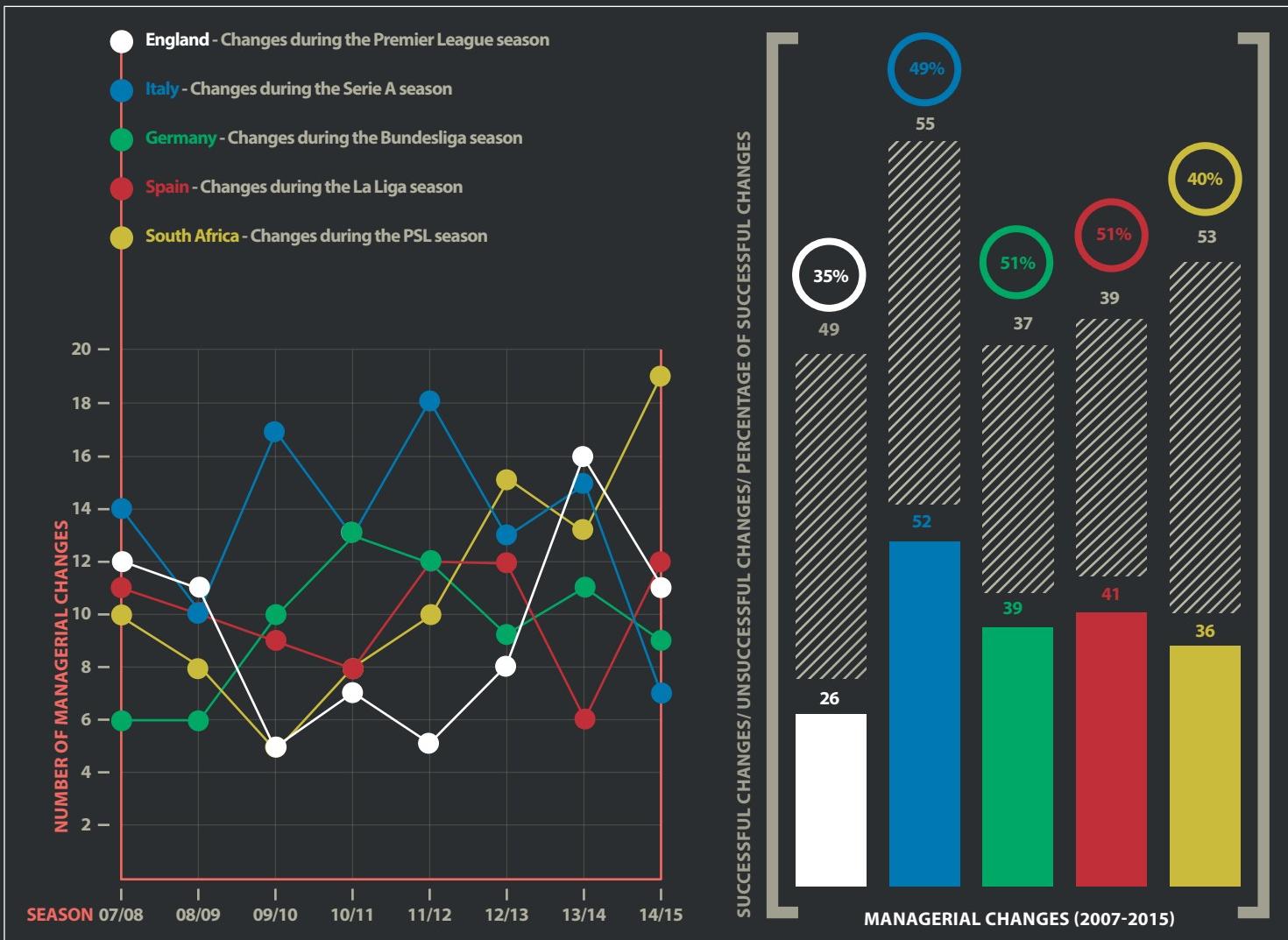
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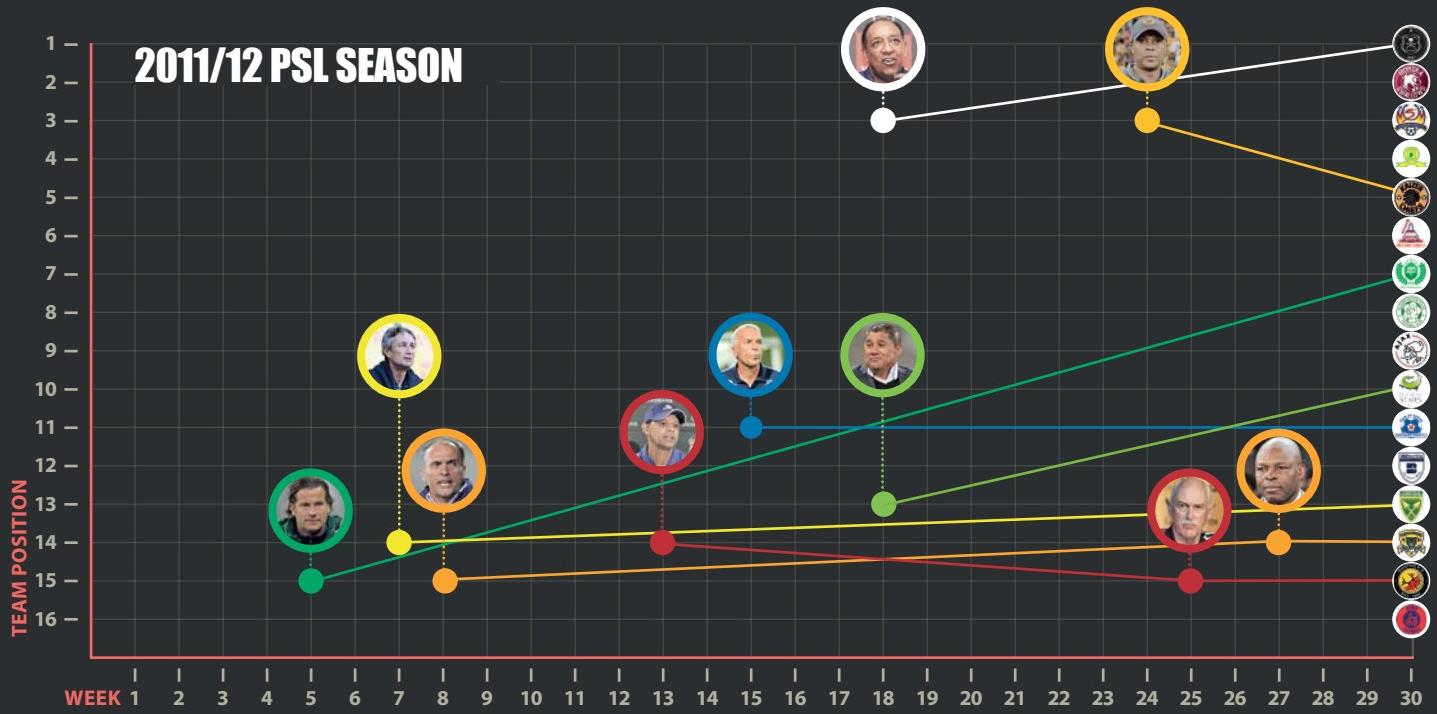
# WHEN IS BEST TO FIRE A COACH?

Professional football is a hard business. If results are bad, the head coach is often the first man to take the blame. But does it pay to change coaches in the middle of the season? **KICK OFF** compares the PSL's **coaching changes** with those of the **four major leagues in Europe** over the last **eight seasons**, while revealing an **in-depth analysis** of PSL **coaching changes** during the season over the past **four years**, as we reveal the ideal time for clubs to change their manager.

BY FABIO DE DOMINICIS

\*NOTE: We have termed **MANAGERIAL SUCCESS** as a coach who has improved his side's League position from the position at which the club was placed when he took over \*\* Managerial changes made during the season only. Interim and caretaker coaches included.





**I**t is the iron law of football – if a team fails, the coach must fall.

Replacing a coach mid-season can often bring about a change in fortunes, for the better. But even more frequently, such a change leads to no improvement at all. The facts prove this.

Sometimes a decision to fire a coach and bring in a new face backfires spectacularly – it is not uncommon for a club to slip even further down the table after changing coaches during a campaign.

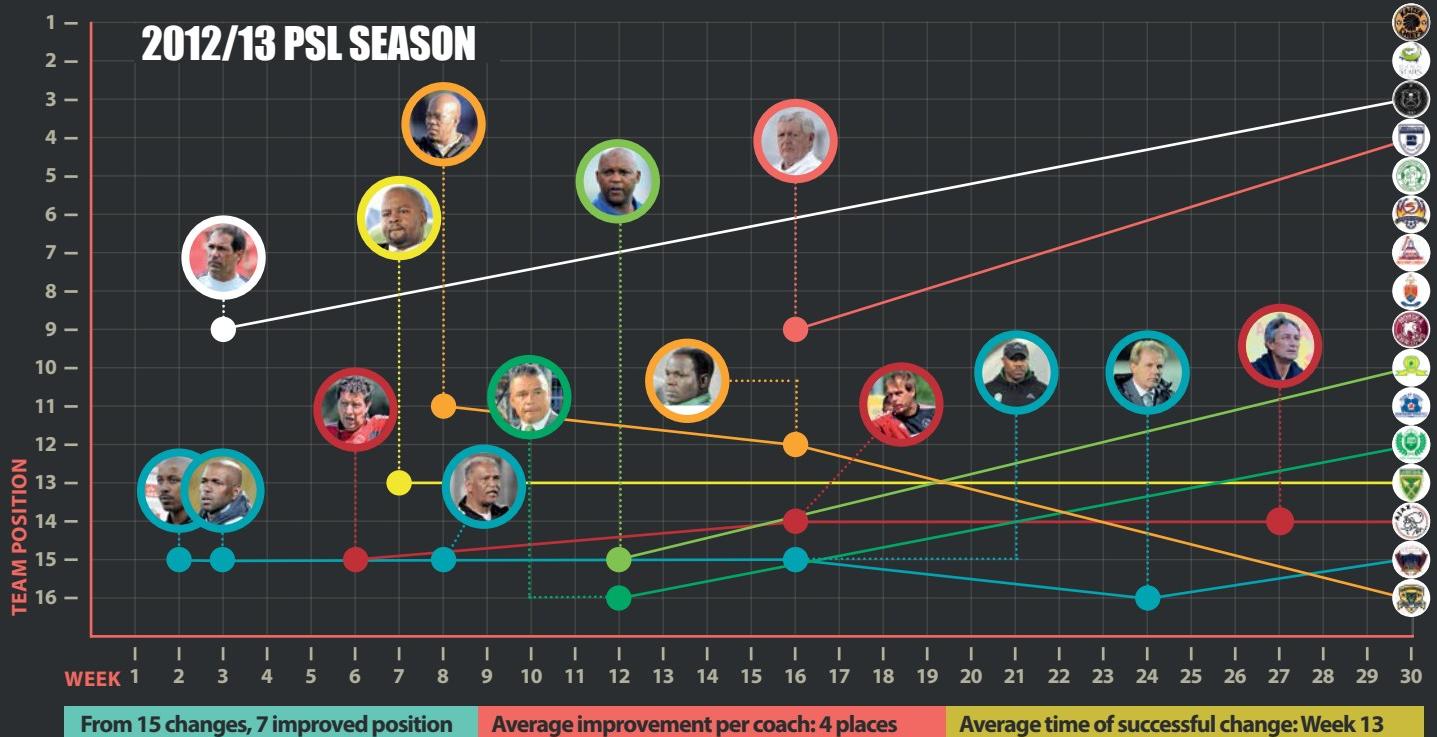
Take Black Leopards for example, who brought in Abel Makhubele in the 2012/13 season (below) while in 12th position, but he took the club down. Often, results pick up when a new man takes over as every player is looking to impress him – Clive Barker helped lift Bidvest Wits from ninth to fourth when he took over midway through the same season.

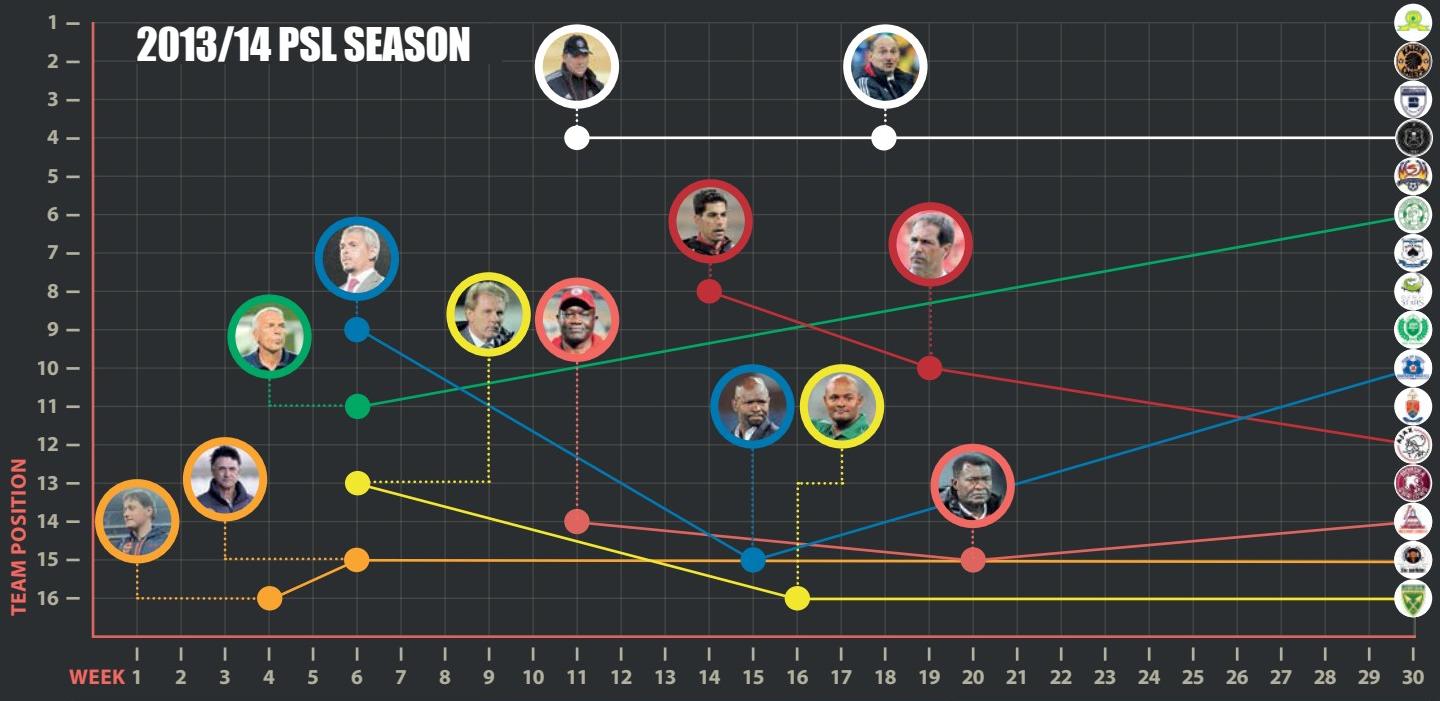
No matter who the coach is, some teams are simply just not good enough. The decision to fire a coach is not one to be taken lightly, and club

bosses need to consider the impact of such a drastic change on the team, and on the club as a whole.

Is there a point in the season when it really is just too soon to change coaches? And is there any point making a change in the closing weeks of a campaign when the game is almost up?

Assessing coaching changes over the past four years, but not considering those made in the off-season, KICK OFF crunches the numbers and tries to answer this question: When is the best time to fire a coach?





### BEST IMPROVEMENTS

**Gordon Iglesund (SuperSport United):** Iglesund took charge in Week 5 of the 2014/15 season when Matsantsantsa were languishing in 14th place, yet guided them to a sixth-place finish by the end of the season.

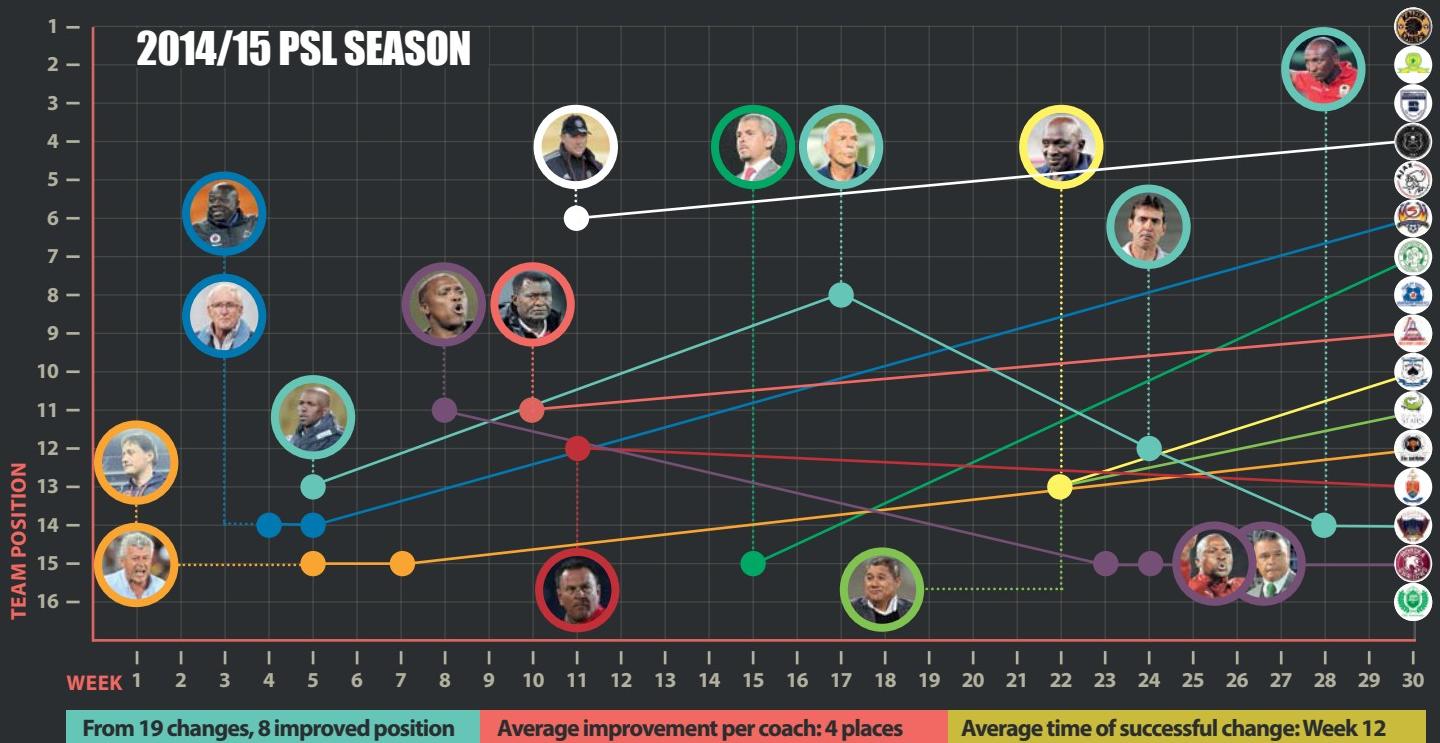
**Roger Palmgren (AmaZulu):** Usuthu were in 15th when Palmgren took charge in Week 5 of the 2011/12 season, and helped them into seventh spot by the end of the campaign.

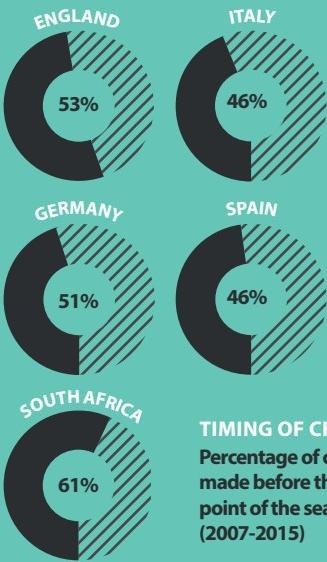


### WORST CHANGES

**Clinton Larsen (Maritzburg United):** Larsen was brought in with the Team of Choice ninth after six weeks in the 2013/14 campaign. He was replaced by Steve Komphela nine weeks later with Maritzburg hovering above relegation in 15th.

**Ernst Middendorp (Chippa United):** Middendorp joined from Week 17 with Chippa in 8th position in the 2014/15 standings, but lasted just seven games in charge as he was shown the door, leaving the Chilli Boys in 12th spot on the table.





MANAGERIAL CHANGES MADE DURING THE SEASON (2007-2015)



**Abel Makhubele (Black Leopards):** Makhubele was brought in with Lidoda Duvha in 12th place after 16 weeks of the 2012/13 season. However, Leopards slipped further and further down the table under his guidance, and were relegated after finishing bottom.

**Fani Madida (Moroka Swallows):** Madida was tasked with saving Swallows, who were in 11th in Week 8 of the 2014/15 campaign. Yet by Week 23, the Dube Birds were not faring any better, as he was replaced with Swallows stuttering in 15th.



## FINDINGS

Statistically speaking, the earlier a change is made in the PSL, the better. On average, successful changes occur around the 12th week of the campaign, meaning November is a good time to change the coach. However, looking at all the changes over the past four seasons in South Africa's top-flight, only 40% of new coaches lifted their side's League position from when they took charge, with the average successful change resulting in a four-place climb up the standings. **KO**

MANAGERIAL CHANGES MADE DURING THE 2014/15 SEASON



## PSL STATISTICS

**PSL clubs with the most changes during the season over the past four seasons:**

CHIPPA UNITED: 9 // ORLANDO PIRES: 5  
AJAX CAPE TOWN: 5 // AMAZULU: 4  
GOLDEN ARROWS: 4 // BLACK LEOPARDS: 4  
POLOKWANE CITY: 4

**Total PSL coaching changes during the season over the past four seasons:**

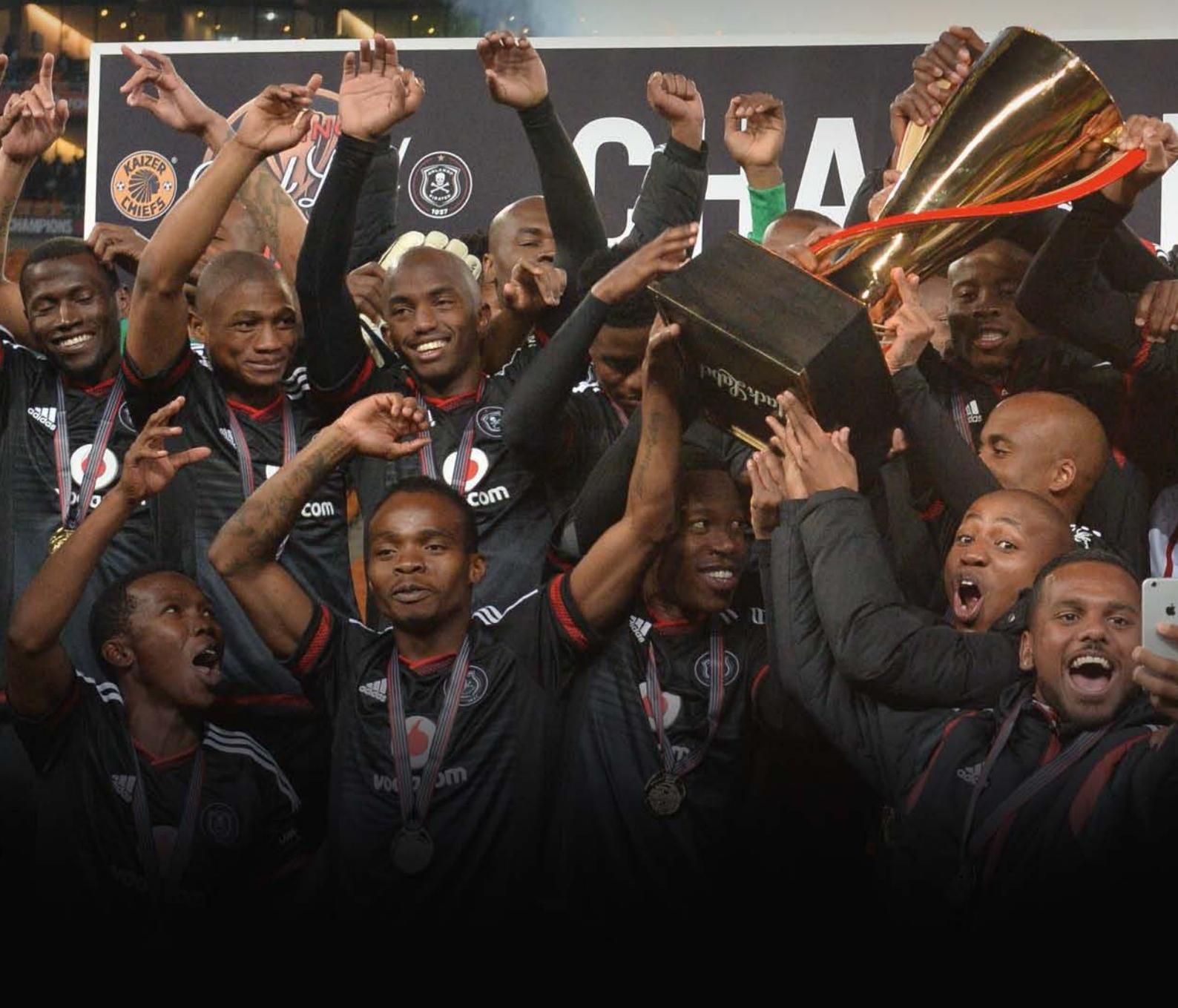
2011/12: 10 // 2012/13: 15 // 2013/14: 13  
2014/15: 19  
**TOTAL: 57**

From 57 changes, 23 improved position (40%)

Average improvement per coach: 4 places

Average time of successful change: Week 12

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# HIGHER POWER

It can be scientifically proven that players from the coast are at a disadvantage. **BY NICK SAID**

**D**o the Premier Soccer League's 'inland' clubs have an advantage over those from the coast because they train and mostly play at high altitude?

The unequivocal answer from scientists and players appears to be 'yes'. The fact that 12 of the 16 PSL clubs contesting the 2015/16 season are from cities at high altitude does level the playing field somewhat – but the unlucky four must find ways to make up their disadvantage.

Ajax Cape Town, Golden Arrows, Maritzburg United and Chippa United must make the constant adjustment from

sea level to the energy-sapping highlands of the interior.

How many points do these teams lose in a season because they cannot cope with the effects of altitude? It is hard to say, but it is bound to be more than just a few.

Johannesburg is the most challenging environment for coastal visitors – situated 1 750 metres above sea level where the air is considerably thinner, this means less oxygen is available to the lungs. Bloemfontein is at 1 400 metres above sea level, Polokwane 1 300 metres and Rustenburg 1 150 metres.

How does this impact on players?

Roger de Sa spent his playing career at high altitude, keeping goal for Moroka Swallows and Mamelodi Sundowns, but

now as Ajax coach he worries about the consequences of playing in Gauteng and other upcountry venues.

"It is a big factor; every time we go to play up there it takes a while to adjust. Players start gasping for a second breath. It is something that you have to overcome, but there is no easy fix unless you train at altitude all the time. It is a big obstacle for us and something that is hard to coach against."

Bloemfontein Celtic coach Clinton Larsen, who spent years in Durban at Manning Rangers before moving inland to Orlando Pirates, says: "Altitude is definitely a factor affecting performance. In my playing days I was always super-fit, but when we played inland I felt like I



Ajax Cape Town's record defeat last season was a 4-0 loss to Orlando Pirates at Orlando Stadium

## Home 'disadvantage'



DO South African teams take advantage of the country's high altitude when hosting foreign sides? Seemingly not.

Orlando Pirates twice in recent times chose to host foreign opponents at the coast – to their cost. In February 2012 they lost 3-1 to RCD Libolo from Angola in the CAF Champions League first round in Port Elizabeth (*above*). The next year, they hosted Gaborone United, again in PE. The visitors scored two late goals to eliminate Bucs. Would they have done this in Soweto, 700 metres higher than Gaborone?

It is the same with Bafana Bafana.

The 2013 Nations Cup quarter-final against Mali played at Moses Mabhida Stadium in Durban went to extra-time. The game finished 1-1, Mali advancing 3-1 on penalties. How different might it have been had the Malians been forced to play at FNB Stadium? Extra-time minutes and weary legs in the shoot-out might have made all the difference, especially as many in the Mali side were plying their trade in the lowlands of Europe. Taking Mali to altitude could have given Bafana the extra 10 percent needed to win.

The same could be said for the 0-0 draw with Gambia in the 2017 Nations Cup qualifiers, also played in Durban. South Africa had the fitness edge over the Gambians to start with and opened the game up in the final 20 minutes, but could not put their chances away. Would Gambia have been physically and mentally able to withstand the Bafana onslaught at altitude? We will never know.

hadn't trained for a week. That is the big effect it had on me.

"In the second half of matches I felt like my legs were gone – that would never happen at sea level unless I was coming back from a long injury lay-off or something like that.

"It is strange because it makes you feel unfit, even though you know in your mind that is not the case. It can be a real battle.

"It affects people differently; some guys were okay, but others really struggled and it became quite debilitating for them."

That is a story told by many players past and present, and it is easy to see how teams from coastal regions would be at a disadvantage. But what is the science behind this?

One of South Africa's leading experts on the subject is Ross Tucker, currently Professor of Exercise Physiology with the School of Medicine at the University of the Free State. He is an internationally renowned figure whose expertise is sought by teams and athletes from all over the world.

"South Africa is unique in that no other country I can think of demands that elite sportsmen perform at sea level and then at altitude with such regularity and with

such short turnaround times," Tucker writes in *The Science of Sport*.

"Altitude affects performance in various ways. Broadly, there are two effects – one is on the physiology, the second is on the flight of the ball – reduced air density means faster, further and higher."

Tucker wrote extensively on the effects of altitude on footballers during the 2010 World Cup, but says the best illustration is actually the 1968 Olympic Games in Mexico City as performances there could be measured against previous records.

"For the clearest illustration of the effect of altitude on exercise, go back to 1968. Remember Ron Clarke, a runner heavily favoured to win gold at 10 000m, lying collapsed on the track after the race. To this day, he blames the altitude for heart problems he experiences."

"Mexico City's altitude of 2 200 metres imposed a significant challenge for distance runners, and it's no coincidence that the times in those events were uncharacteristically slow in 1968, and all the middle- and long-distance events were won by African runners who all live and train at altitude."

So it is clear that there is an advantage to be had. But what does this mean for football?

"For football, the problem is that sprints are repeated over and over, with short recoveries. Altitude reduces sprint performance by between 5 percent and 10 percent, depending on the rest period."

Tucker says that prior to the 2010 World Cup, he and his colleagues were told by Fifa not to talk about altitude as a factor for the players, even though it clearly was one.

Fifa wanted the rest of the world to believe the playing fields were level between Cape Town and Johannesburg, when studies – and simple geography for that matter – show they were not.

"My own experience of football, hockey and running convince me very strongly that the altitudes of South Africa's inland venues have a significant effect on performance," Tucker says.

"Fifa were clamping down on any talk about altitude in South Africa. Scientists here, including yours truly, were told in no uncertain terms to refrain from speaking about it."

***"In the second half of matches I felt like my legs were gone – that would never happen at sea level."***

Regarding football specifically, Tucker says no proven study has been made to link the game and altitude, but he has his own considered theories, namely:

- Players not used to high altitudes cover less distance than they do at sea-level.
- Sprint distances are reduced. A key difference between good and great players is that the great players sprint more and do more high-intensity running than the good players. There's a sense that altitude turns the great players into good players, at least in terms of their sprinting and running distance.
- The drop-off in the second half of the match is even more pronounced.
- Players attempt fewer sprints in a match because they do not recover adequately, so they look for ways to increase the rest period, thus passing up opportunities to sprint.
- Decision-making is compromised, as is skill execution as a result of fatigue and other sensations (breathlessness, for example).

## What about Bolivia?

FIFA briefly banned Bolivia, Colombia and Ecuador from playing home World Cup qualifier matches in their capital cities in 2007, citing concerns that the high altitude of those countries gave them an unfair advantage.

It followed a complaint by the Brazilian Football Confederation that visiting players were left gasping for breath and with pounding hearts.

The ban lasted a year until May 2008, when Fifa rescinded it following complaints from every other South American nation bar Brazil.

The Bolivian capital of La Paz is at an astounding 4 000m above sea level (twice as high as Johannesburg) and has become a fortress for the home side. They beat a Diego Maradona-coached Argentina 6-1 there in 2009.

It all makes for rather bleak reading for coastal teams and is an illustration of the challenges that Larsen spoke about as a player.

And looking back now, with the views of Tucker, it may provide some explanation as to why much of the football at the 2010 World Cup was slow, methodical and

lacked real bursts of excitement.

Were teams so worried about altitude that they played within themselves so as not to be caught out in the last 25 minutes of matches? It would seem so.

Another factor is the movement of the ball. The thinner air at altitude means that there is less resistance pushing against the ball and it flies through the air faster.

This is a problem for goalkeepers not used to the quicker speed, but also players who need to find their range of passing.

Studies show that from a free-kick, a player could get up to 60 centimetres less 'bend' on the ball at altitude. That means a set-piece that shaves the upright in Johannesburg might well have been a goal in Cape Town. The ball will also dip less, making it harder to get it up over the wall and down again.

South Africa's geography means altitude will always be a factor, there is no escaping it.

So next time a player from the coast appears to diminish his effort in the final 15 minutes of the game, we should not be too hard on him. Those aching muscles are being starved of the oxygen he is used to. **KO**

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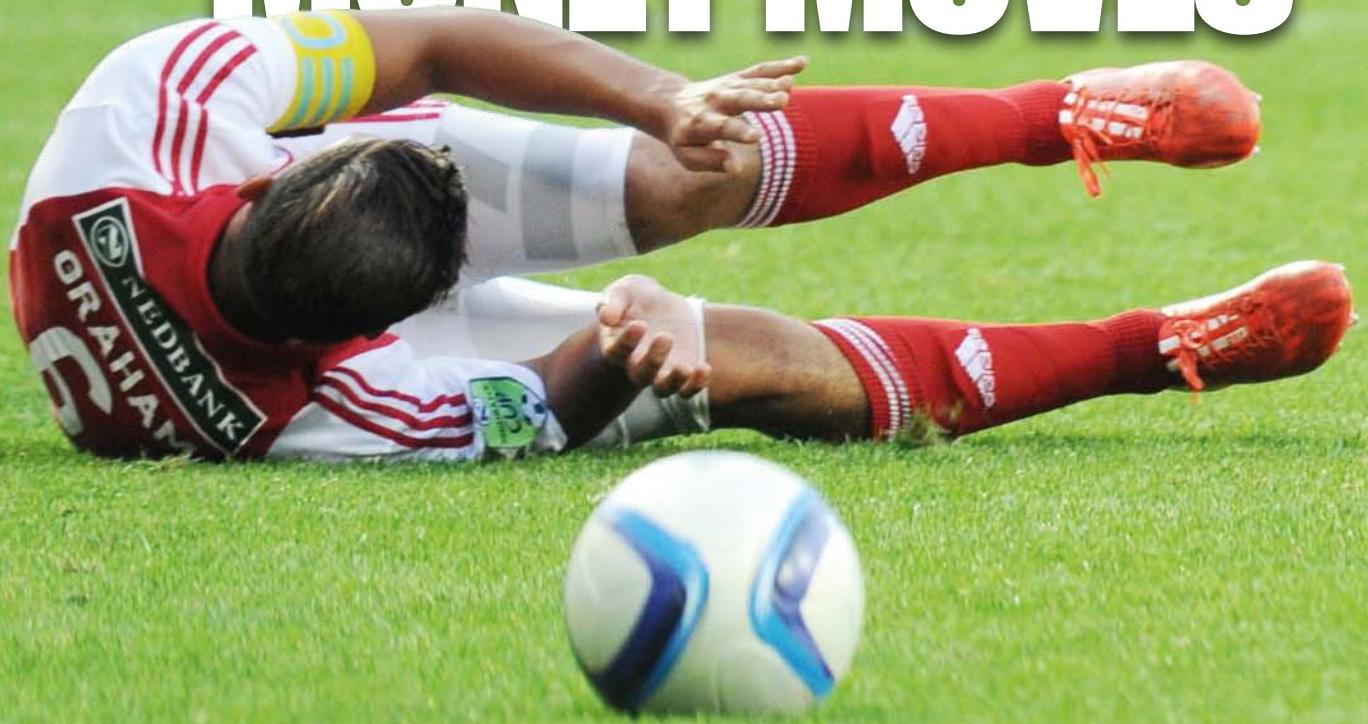


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# BIG MONEY MOVES





## Revealed, for the first time ever, South Africa's most expensive transfers.

BY NICK SAID

The smoke and mirrors that generally surround transfers involving South African clubs makes it difficult to determine their true value. But after an extensive investigation and talking to insiders with knowledge of South Africa's transfer business, KICK OFF has come up with what we believe to be the most accurate list of our most expensive transfers ever recorded. The situation is made more complex by the different elements that make up a transfer – from the straight fee paid by one club to another to the various add-ons and, in some instances, salaries when a player is loaned back to the selling club, as was the case with Keagan Dolly's move from Ajax Cape Town to Mamelodi Sundowns. The majority of deals done in the South African market are for free agents, or full or part swap deals. So big transfer fees are rare. We have broken down our list as transfers between PSL clubs and those from South Africa to teams abroad. And we have compensated to reflect the value of the transfer in today's terms to better compare what their true value was at the time.

### TOP 10 PSL-TO-PSL TRANSFERS

#### KHAMA BILLIAT

►Transfer: Ajax Cape Town to Mamelodi Sundowns (2013) ►Transfer fee then: R8-million ►Transfer fee now: R8.84-million

By most people's reckoning the biggest transfer ever between two PSL clubs. Some sources peg the figure even higher, at R10-million, but the majority have it at R8-million – a staggering amount of money nonetheless. Billiat had a better second season than his first and Sundowns hope that improvement continues.

#### KEAGAN DOLLY

►Transfer: Ajax Cape Town to Mamelodi Sundowns (2014) ►Transfer fee then: R7.5-million ►Transfer value now: R7.79-million

Dolly's transfer from Ajax to Sundowns was complicated in that it was made up of the initial R6-million fee, before Sundowns forked out a further R1.5-million on his wages for the season he remained with the Urban Warriors on loan, taking the total to R7.5-million.

#### BUHLE MKHWANAZI

►Transfer: University of Pretoria to Bidvest Wits (2014) ►Transfer fee then: R7-million ►Transfer value now: R7.27-million

Mkhwanazi was wanted by a number of clubs, but ended up signing for Wits who splashed out for his signature to beat off

#### Double deal



MAMELODI Sundowns paid Santos R7-million for Eleazar Rodgers and Wayne Arendse in 2012. It has proven difficult to obtain accurate figures for the split between the two, but sources suggest Rodgers cost in the region of R4-million, which adjusted for inflation would come to R4.7-million. Rodgers spent just a single season with Sundowns, and while Arendse remains at the club, he has started just 20 League matches in his time at Chloorkop. Last year, Sundowns made another double-buy, spending R6-million on Mario Booyens and Rheece Evans. Booyens made 13 starts last season and Evans none.

competition. Coach Gavin Hunt often says they have signed only loans and fees in his time with the club, but he overlooks this whopper of a transfer.

### MORGAN GOULD

►Transfer: SuperSport United to Kaizer Chiefs (2012) ►Transfer fee then: R6-million ►Transfer value now: R7.05-million

Gould was club captain at SuperSport and one of the top defenders in the PSL when he switched to Amakhosi in 2012. A succession of Achilles injuries meant he has not made anywhere near the number of appearances Chiefs would have liked to justify the fee, but when called upon, Gould has been steady and dependable.

### MULOMOWANDAU MATHOHO

►Transfer: Bloemfontein Celtic to Kaizer Chiefs (2012) ►Transfer fee then: R5-million ►Transfer value now: R5.87-million

Figures suggested for Mathoho's transfer fee range from between R4-million and R6-million. The true amount lies somewhere in the middle of that scale. Mathoho has repaid that by playing a major role in the club's two recent League title wins.

### EDWARD MANQUELE

►Transfer: Free State Stars to Mamelodi Sundowns (2013) ►Transfer fee then: R5-million ►Transfer value now: R5.52-million

Sundowns splashed the cash for bustling Free State Stars forward Manqele, but history suggests it was not money well spent. His performances were considered not up to scratch, and he then fell out with Sundowns over his release to Chippa United. Having paid so much for him, Downs were trying to recoup as much as possible.

### CUTHBERT MALAJILA

►Transfer: Maritzburg United to Mamelodi Sundowns (2013) ►Transfer fee then: R5-million ►Transfer value now: R5.52-million

Malajila was overlooked by many clubs before Ernst Middendorp, after a second trial, brought him to Maritzburg United in 2012. After just one season he was hot property and Sundowns won the race for his signature. Various sources place the transfer fee at between R4.5-million and R5-million, most towards the upper end.



SuperSport United smiled their way to the bank after Elias Pelembe was sold to city rivals Mamelodi Sundowns

### ELIAS PELEMBE

►Transfer: SuperSport United to Mamelodi Sundowns (2009) ►Transfer fee then: R4.5-million ►Transfer value now: R6.06-million

Pelembé was the PSL's Player of the Season in 2007/08 and SuperSport were bitterly disappointed to lose their man to their crosstown rivals, but the money was just too good to turn down. He recently left Sundowns for free, linking up again with Gavin Hunt at Bidvest Wits.

### ANTHONY LAFFOR

►Transfer: SuperSport United to Mamelodi Sundowns (2012) ►Transfer fee then: R4.5-million ►Transfer value now: R5.29-million

Sundowns' bid for Laffor was not well received by SuperSport, but money talks.

The versatile Laffor has been a steady campaigner in the PSL, though he has been used sparingly by Pitso Mosimane in the last two seasons.

### DANIEL CARDOSO

►Transfer: Free State Stars to Kaizer Chiefs (2015) ►Transfer fee: R4-million

Another big-money defender signed by Chiefs and a surprise entry into our top 10, but two different sources with knowledge of the deal confirm that R4-million is indeed the figure paid for Cardoso. The 26-year-old only made his Premiership debut in 2012/13, but has been a revelation – when fit. Injuries have curtailed Cardoso's appearances to a large degree, but as this list shows, Chiefs are happy to pay top money for quality defenders.



South African star Benni McCarthy began his illustrious European career with Ajax Amsterdam after his big-money move from Seven Stars

## TOP FIVE PSL TRANSFERS ABROAD

For our calculations on the top transfers from the PSL to clubs overseas, we have calculated what the figure was at the time according to the exchange rate, and then shown what that figure would be today based on the current Rand value against the Euro.

### THULANI SERERO

► Transfer: Ajax Cape Town to Ajax Amsterdam, Netherlands (2011) ► Transfer fee then: R24.22-million ► Transfer value now: R34.6-million

Serero is the most recent player to swap Cape Town for Amsterdam after his magnificent 2010/11 season under Foppe de Haan at the Urban Warriors. After initial struggles, his last two seasons have been a triumph personally and include a Uefa

Champions League goal against Barcelona. His future with the club is now less certain though, as new signings might push him down the pecking order.

### BENNI MCCARTHY

► Transfer: Seven Stars to Ajax Amsterdam (1997) ► Transfer fee then: R22.12-million ► Transfer value now: R51-million

McCarthy's final transfer fee to be paid from Ajax Amsterdam to Seven Stars

### Expensive mistake



LOOK away now Mamelodi Sundowns fans: the story of Lerato Chabangu is a woeful tale of one of the great transfer bungles of all time.

SuperSport United signed a pre-contract with Chabangu in January 2009 while he was a Sundowns player. Annoyed, they allowed the winger to leave straight away. But after six months, they realised their mistake and wanted Chabangu back – so desperately that they paid SuperSport R2.5-million to get him back, having let him walk for free earlier. Worse, Chabangu started just two more League matches for Sundowns before being released.

## FEATURE MOST EXPENSIVE TRANSFERS

would only be determined some 18 months after he left Cape Town. That's because Stars took a portion of the more than US\$8-million Spanish side Celta Vigo paid Ajax for him in 1999. That took his total transfer fee from Stars to US\$4-million, a hefty sum of money then and now.

### KNOWLEDGE MUSONA

► Transfer: Kaizer Chiefs to Hoffenheim (2011)  
► Transfer fee then: R15.44-million ► Transfer value now: R22.15-million

Musona was a prized asset at Chiefs and the scourge of many a PSL defence when he was snapped up by Bundesliga side Hoffenheim in 2011. His first season in Europe did not go according to plan as he battled to adjust, while his second on loan at Augsburg was not much better. After returning to Chiefs on loan for the 2013/14 campaign, he is now finding more success in Europe at KV Oostende in Belgium.

### BERNARD PARKER

► Transfer: Thanda Royal Zulu to FC Twente (2009)

► Transfer fee then: R9.97-million ► Transfer value now: R16.1-million

Parker initially left Thanda Royal Zulu in 2009 for Red Star Belgrade, but when the Serbian side could not come up with the money for the transfer fee, he returned to KwaZulu-Natal. That opened the door for a big move to Dutch club FC Twente, who paid 1-million Euros. The Bafana Bafana striker never quite cut it in the Netherlands and after a loan spell in Greece returned to Kaizer Chiefs in 2011.

### BONGANI KHUMALO

► Transfer: SuperSport United to Tottenham Hotspur (2011) ► Transfer fee then: R9.06-million ► Transfer value now: R15.89-million

Khumalo has recently returned from Tottenham Hotspur to SuperSport, having not kicked a ball in anger for the North London club during his four years in England. He had numerous loan spells, but for Matsatsantsa to pick him up again on a free four years later is a great piece of business. KO

### Bargain of the century?



THERE have been many great deals brokered in the Premier Soccer League where players have gone for little or no money and turned out to be massive hits at their new club. Among the best was the R1.5-million that Kaizer Chiefs paid Free State Stars for the services of Siphiwe Tshabalala in early 2007. That equates to only approximately R2.65-million today if we allow for inflation, a snip for an iconic Chiefs player now about to enter his ninth full season at the club as their captain. The one rider to this story? Tshabalala was a part of the Chiefs development structures before being let go as a youngster, meaning they had to buy him back at a later date.

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#ThingsThatReallyMatter

# THE REAL DEALS

What do Andre Arendse, Lucky Lekgwathi and Wilfred Mugeyi have in common? They are among the best signings made in PSL history. Zola Doda profiles 11 **Great Transfers** of the PSL era.

There are three types of players signed in every transfer window: those who come with high expectations, those who come with low expectations, and the virtual unknowns.

And if local history is anything to go by, the majority of the best buys are those who were signed as unknown entities. Who that player might become in the coming season, only time will tell.

Former Zimbabwean twins Wilfred and William Mugeyi joined Bush Bucks in 1993 from Black Aces in Zimbabwe, and the duo now hold legendary status in local football, despite having never played for the so-called Big Three.

Orlando Pirates' Lucky Lekgwathi, also signed as a relative unknown in 2002 from Ria Stars, is now entering his 14th year at the club, having made his debut in August 2002 when his current teammate Menzi Masuku was just six years old!

Raphael Chukwu and John Maduka -

who like the Mugeyi twins were already international footballers – arrived as unknowns and took local football by storm. Siphiwe Tshabalala and Reneilwe Letsholonyane were both signed without much fanfare and have both gone on to exceed expectations.

"Who is this now?" you will hear fans ask as a new man runs out alongside the established heroes. But hidden among the unknowns signed from a so-called 'small club' and amidst the so-called 'average foreigners' lie hidden gems and potential shining stars.

Former Kaizer Chiefs and Pirates coach Augusto Palacios believes clubs these days cannot easily sign an established star and know he will take the League by storm.

"You just don't find players like Roger Feutmba and Ernest Mtawali anymore. In the late 80s and early 90s you could find those players; there were a few of them, but they were very good," he says.

"Back then we had just three slots for foreigners and they had to be filled by the best of the best. Also, clubs didn't have money like they have nowadays."

Ted Dumitru is gloomy about the prospect of seeing many 'great signings' in the future. The man who signed Zambian Under-23 international Collins Mbesuma for Chiefs from under the nose of Pirates says: "Coaches can't buy top players anymore because there is no quality available. In the PSL, clubs are recycling the same players over and over again – a player can play for as many as eight or nine clubs and that is because of a lack of quality coming through the development structures. Name one 18- or 19-year-old player that has made an exceptional appearance in the PSL recently? Nothing. Zero."

Depressing words.

Bloemfontein Celtic coach Clinton Larsen is more positive that good young talent is still available for those who know where – and how – to look for it. He says the club doesn't have to spend big to find quality. He also believes a relatively unknown foreigner who proves good enough to become a noteworthy star can still be found.

"The first thing people must understand is that the Madukas, Chukwus and Feutmbas – the foreigners of the past who were so different to current players – those guys stood head and shoulders above the rest. You can't find them anymore," he says.

"The South African market has been

**“ Name one 18-year-old who has made an exceptional appearance recently? Zero. ”**

blown out of proportion and we are not a club that forks out millions for a player. We got [Geoffrey] Massa for free and [Vuyisile] Wana as well – these are players who were shining lights at teams that were struggling last season. Massa scored double figures in the last two seasons and was playing for a team that didn't create as many chances as Celtic does.

"In my opinion, he has done well as a striker and he is up there with the best. Same with [Helder] Pelembe: he was at the wrong club [Pirates] where chances of playing were scarce. If [Lehlohonolo] Majoro struggled to break into the team, how much more difficult was it for Pelembe?"

So can Pelembe, Massa or Wana become a star that makes a KICK OFF 'best signings' list sometime in the distant future? The beauty of football is that we just don't know ...

#### **COLLINS MBESUMA (KAIZER CHIEFS)**

When Zambian international Collins Mbesuma signed for Kaizer Chiefs midway through the 2003/04 season, very little was known about him. When the burly striker left Amakhosi for English side Portsmouth 18 months later, it was a huge relief to local defenders.

Before joining Amakhosi, Mbesuma was on the wanted list of Orlando Pirates and Jomo Cosmos as the buzz around his performance at Under-23 level grew. It took persuasion from Ted Dumitru to secure his signature for Amakhosi. Dumitru had a good idea what he was getting – as Zambia's national coach between 1980 and 1982 one of his players was Mbesuma's father, the late Francis Kajiyia.

Mbusuma's first six months at Chiefs yielded just two goals in six matches as he was pegged back by injury. But the 2004/05 season lingers long in the memory: Mbesuma scored 35 goals in all competitions and more League goals than all Wits University players put together that season.

His first match of the season was away to Dynamos and 'Ntfonto' bulldozed his way to a hat-trick in a 4-1 win. His second hat-trick of the season was against Sundowns in what was his best performance for Chiefs.

The Zambian opened the floodgates, netting three goals inside 16 minutes – Sundowns will consider themselves lucky



Mbesuma's record-breaking tally of 35 goals in the 2004/05 season etched his name into Amakhosi's history books

to only lose by a solitary goal in the 4-3 defeat that day.

All season long, 'Ntfonto' terrorised opponents as Chiefs successfully retained their League title. All across the country, defences had been 'Mbesuma-ed'.

#### **LUCKY LEKGWATHI (ORLANDO PIRATES)**

When Lucky Lekgwathi signed for Orlando Pirates in 2002, few could have expected the defender, who had once been a Real Rovers reserve, to become a club legend.

In a move to reduce the number of clubs from 18 to 16, the League bought out the status of Ria Stars and Free State Stars. Lekgwathi, then 26, was one of



Veteran – Lucky Lekgwathi captained Orlando Pirates to the glorious 'Double Treble'

**Wilfred Mugeyi outsmarts a young Jimmy Tau in the colours of Umtata Bush Bucks**



Ria Ledwaba's players snatched by the Buccaneers.

In 13 years at the club, he has formed partnerships alongside players like Papi Khomane, Mbulelo Mabizela and recently Rooi Mahamutsa and Happy Jele.

But his first few years were not by any means the easiest. Lekgwathi won his first League title in his maiden season, but was not a regular after that, and he had to wait another seven years before getting a second winners' medal. The wait was well worth it as he captained the Buccaneers to incredible trophy success, winning the 'Double Treble' between 2010 and 2012.

In 2013 he came close to lifting the CAF Champions League trophy as Pirates lost 3-1 to Egyptians Al-Ahly in the Final.

#### **WILLIAM MUGEYI (BUSH BUCKS)**

Wilfred Mugeyi proved that you don't have to play for Chiefs or Pirates to make a name for yourself.

The Zimbabwean international striker, known as the 'Silver Fox' due to his calculated moves and ability to outsmart defenders, announced his arrival by helping Imbabala win the 1993 Coca-Cola Cup, trouncing Santos 3-1 in the

Final. He opened the scoring in the Final, the other two coming from Brendan Augustine.

The inaugural PSL season in 1996/97 was Mugeyi's finest campaign as he scooped almost every individual award on offer: top goalscorer, Player of the Season and Players' Player of the Season. (only KICK OFF readers passed him over, voting for Thabo Mooki as their Footballer of the Season).

As expected, Chiefs came knocking for Mugeyi's signature, but the Fox was loyal, and remained in Umtata, save for short spells in Israel and China.

Umtata's Independence Stadium was known as 'the Slaughterhouse' as the Mugeyi twins, Augustine, Thabo Mngomeni, John Maduka, Vincent Sokhela, Lefa Gqosha, Mongi Rula, John Mbidzo, Fezile Momo, Mongezi Malashe, Abram Lethebe and Nigel Dixon combined to make Bush Bucks one of the finest teams in the PSL, winning a second Coca-Cola Cup under Trott Moloto in 1996.

It was only much later in his career that Mugeyi cashed in with a move to a big city, joining Ajax Cape Town in 2003.

#### **WILLIAM MUGEYI (BUSH BUCKS)**

While Wilfred Mugeyi was banging in goals up front, his twin brother William was either defending them or sending in crosses with his sweet left foot.

William was an intelligent player who, instead of spending 90 minutes waiting to be attacked, put opponents on the back-foot, spending as much time as possible in the opposition half. He was also deadly with free-kicks and was known to score directly from corners.

Unlike his twin brother, William spent his entire South African career at Bush Bucks, retiring in 2005 to take over as an assistant coach.

#### **RAPHAEL CHUKWU (SUNDOWNS)**

They did not call him 'Chukwu Train' for nothing – Raphael Chukwu was truly untouchable during the years he spent with Sundowns. The Nigerian international joined in 1996, signed by former Super Eagles coach Clemens Westerhof.

Chukwu was worried when Westerhof was sacked before he had played his first match for the club. He need not have been. Although in 1996/97 under Reinhard Fabisch and then the returning

**Mugeyi proved you don't have to play for Chiefs or Pirates to make a name for yourself.**

Screamer Tshabalala, Sundowns were a ‘bunch of losers’, Chukwu was picking up momentum – he scored 11 goals in 26 matches.

The next season Sundowns found their spark. Roger Feutmba returned from Belgium to re-ignite the flame, Daniel Mudau was on fire and the Chukwu train became unstoppable. He netted 17 times as the Brazilians won the League and BobSave SuperBowl Double.

Earlier that campaign, in the Rothmans Cup Final against Chiefs, Chukwu equalised to force a replay; in the rematch three days later, Chiefs scored first once more and Chukwu equalised again. His heroics were not enough though, as Chiefs won the 3-2 on penalties.

The following season the striker picked up where he left off, banging in 18 goals as Sundowns won the League again. During 1999/2000 season Chukwu left Sundowns for Italian Serie A side AS Bari, but returned on loan during 2000/01 and scored 14 goals.

He had two more spells on loan that did not yield the same results, but this did little to diminish the legend.

### **SIPHIWE TSHABALALA (KAIZER CHIEFS)**

When national coach Ted Dumitru selected Free State Stars midfielder Siphiwe Tshabalala for the 2006 African Nations Cup in Egypt he was crucified. The tournament was Bafana Bafana’s worst; they were knocked out in the first round after three defeats and without scoring a goal. But for ‘Shabba’ it was a learning curve of note.

The following year he moved back to his former club Kaizer Chiefs. He spent his first six months side-lined with injury, but when he did finally start playing, nothing could stop him.

Tshabalala’s skill, accurate passes and dangerous crosses made up for his lack of pace. During his first full season he helped Chiefs win the 2007 Telkom Knockout Cup. Meanwhile, Carlos Alberto Parreira was building his 2010 World Cup squad around ‘Shabba’ and Teko Modise.

In the eight seasons he has spent in the colours of Chiefs, Shabba has been one of the most consistent performers in the team – something that is rare during a time when stars might sparkle for three or four years before disappearing.



Chukwu's 17 goals in the 1997/98 season helped Sundowns clinch the League and Cup double

### **ROGER FEUTMBA (SUNDOWNS)**

It's hard to believe that when Cameroon international Roger Feutmba produced his magic for Sundowns between 1997 to 2001, he was already past his best. Feutmba was in the Cameroon squad that made history by becoming the first African side to reach the quarterfinals of the World Cup, in Italy in 1990.

He joined Sundowns in 1995, playing 15 matches before returning to Europe to join Kortrijk in the Belgian Second Division. He returned ahead of the 1997/98 season to become one of the most important members of the great Sundowns team that dominated football at the turn of the century.

His skill – performed only with his left foot – was second to none; Feutmba

broke down most difficult defences with one split pass. Strikers Raphael Chukwu and Daniel Mudau often found themselves surrounded by four defenders, but their midfield general would still pick them out with ease.

Sundowns won three Leagues in a row, a BobSave SuperBowl and a Rothmans Cup; it would be hard to talk about this without mentioning the name Roger Feutmba.

### **JOHN MADUKA (UMTATA BUSH BUCKS)**

Malawi international John Maduka was 26 and at the peak of his powers when he joined Umtata Bush Bucks from Black Aces of Zimbabwe in 1996, just in time for the inaugural PSL season. When he retired in May 2009 a few months shy



**Versatile – Yeye has become a mainstay in the heart of the Kaizer Chiefs midfield**

of his 39th birthday, Maduka had spent 13 years in the League, a feat recognised when he was awarded the PSL Chairman's Award, alongside Andre Arendse.

A hard-working box-to-box midfielder with a velvet touch, Maduka formed a fantastic trio with Ernest Mtawali and Chance Gondwe for Malawi, but it was at Bush Bucks that he created the most memories.

He rarely scored goals (except for 2001/02 when he scored 12), but when he did they well taken long-range shots. After Bush Bucks were relegated in 2003/04, Maduka joined Zulu Royals where he

played for one season before moving to Bloemfontein Celtic, giving excellent service despite his age.

#### **RENEILWE LETSHOLONYANE (KAIZER CHIEFS)**

Reneilwe Letsholonyane is not from the Jomo Cosmos school of hard knocks; in fact, the midfielder came through Benoni United when club boss Dumisani Ndlovu bought Hellenic. Spells with Dangerous Darkies and PJ Stars in the First Division followed, but it was at Cosmos that 'Yeye' excelled. By the time he signed for

**“ Khenyeza’s work-rate, running and general attacking play always made a difference. ”**

Kaizer Chiefs in the 2008/09 season, he was the finished product.

Some have labelled him a defensive midfielder, some an offensive midfielder; Yeye's ability to produce an all-round performance proves that some players are too good to be boxed into one category.

After his arrival at Amakhosi he became a Bafana Bafana regular, and his presence has coincided with regular League and cup success for the club.

#### **MABHUTI KHENYEZA (NUMEROUS)**

No matter which club he has played for, Mabhuti Khenyeza has always turned out to be a great signing. Coming through at Golden Arrows, he was never a prolific 20-goals-a-season striker, but his work-rate, running and general attacking play always made a difference.

After joining Kaizer Chiefs in 2007, Khenyeza helped the club win the Telkom Knockout Cup. But he fell out with coach Muhsin Ertugral and moved to Ajax Cape Town, before securing a big transfer to Mamelodi Sundowns, where he was valued by his star teammates for his unselfish play.

Supersport United followed, before a return to Ajax and then a transfer to Mpumalanga Black Aces. Last season Khenyeza moved down to the First Division to help Arrows gain promotion back to the Premiership at the first attempt.

#### **ANDRE ARENDSE (NUMEROUS)**

Former Bafana Bafana goalkeeper Andre Arendse was a highly influential signing for not one, but three Premiership-winning clubs.

Already a League champion with Cape Town Spurs in 1995, Arendse spent three years in England with Fulham and Oxford United before returning to South Africa in 2000 – his arrival at Santos a catalyst to the club's most successful era. With Arendse in goals, Santos were League champions in 2001/02 and also won the BobSave SuperBowl (2001), the BP Top Eight Cup (2002) and the Absa Cup (2003).

In mid-2003, Arendse joined Sundowns, and despite the arrival of Brian Baloyi a year later, he played a crucial role as the Brazilians won the League in 2005/06. He then moved to Supersport United and helped the club win two League titles. **KO**

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# AMERICA'S MAJOR

Despite many thinking the **MLS** is merely a retirement home for past football heroes, fans may need to seriously reconsider their view of American football – or soccer, as they call it.

BY FABIO DE DOMINICIS

A little over a decade ago, America's Major League Soccer consisted of just ten teams, all battling to keep the country's top football league afloat following financial and operational difficulties.

Today, the MLS is a thriving league of 20 teams that will be expanded to 24 clubs by 2020, and there is no shortage of glitz, glamour and world superstars.

The indicators speak for themselves: in a country with a population in excess of 318-million people, a survey run by ESPN in 2014 revealed that 18 percent of youngsters aged 12-17 describe themselves as "avid supporters of the game". This is even more impressive when one takes into account the traditional competition – American football, baseball, basketball and ice hockey are the cornerstone of the country's sports entertainment, and attract billions of dollars and millions of fans each season.

Crowd attendances at MLS matches are on the up, with last season's average a touch under 20 000



First red, now white – Steven Gerrard made the move to MLS side LA Galaxy from English Premier League club Liverpool.

# R LEAGUE ASCENT

MLS AROUND THE WORLD

spectators, putting the PSL's paltry reported figure of just under 7 000 to shame.

Entertainment is an American speciality, and the MLS is no exception – flares, smoke bombs, drums and chants have created a family environment for all to enjoy, with the Portland Timbers bringing actual chainsaws and logs to their home games, cutting off a piece of wood each time they score!

On the pitch fans have enjoyed a feast of goals; in fact, the average number of MLS goals scored last season is higher than all major European leagues in the 2014/15 campaign (see side-bar). And there is, of course, the major attraction of watching some of the world's finest footballers in action.

A flood of household names including Didier Drogba, David Villa, Frank Lampard, Steven Gerrard and Kaká have added weight to what is becoming a star-studded league.

Many feel these stars are merely cashing in on a golden pay cheque before hanging up their boots, yet Italian talisman Andrea Pirlo insists otherwise.

"I've always been fascinated by MLS," says the deadball specialist, who joined New York City FC in July. "When I saw that great champions like Kaká, Gerrard, Lampard, [Giovanni] Dos Santos, [Sebastian] Giovinco and of course [David] Beckham joined in, I realised that this league was very well liked in America and wanted to grow. I think that it has a lot of potential for future development."

"I think that the MLS is just as important as any other national league. There is nothing better for a soccer player than the respect and

appreciation of his colleagues," he adds. "But, I haven't come here to go on retirement. I came here because I want to play and I want to win."

The freedom of not being mobbed by fans at restaurants and malls is a welcome relief for European stars, aside from other off-the-field benefits luring the big names to North America.

"The cultural diversity is important," new Montreal Impact signing Drogba reveals.

"I quite simply felt like getting to know the city. My children are bilingual. I know there are superb schools here. It also factored into my decision."

*Washington Post* soccer writer Steven Goff feels the MLS is doing its best to attract global stars while nurturing local talent at the same time.

"MLS is trying to strike a balance," he writes. "They're trying to bring in big names who are also quality players, and continue to develop young players and more seasoned players who are in the US national team pool. It's a combination."

"There is definitely a middle class in MLS that is good and stable and getting better. And then you have the top shelf guys who bring a little more attention and experience, and world class quality."

The goal in bringing such stars across the Atlantic is to create this knock-on effect to lift the level of the game throughout the country: raising the profile of the League with superstar signings creates greater interest and a bigger following, which in turn attracts American youngsters to the game, who are then developed from a young age – a reported \$30-million (R385-million) is being spent annually on youth academies and development.

Former PSL and Youth Performance Coach at Ajax Cape Town, Craig von Wielligh, is currently the Player Performance Manager of Global Premier Soccer Academy – the North American partner of Bayern Munich – in Massachusetts. He feels the youth

development model in the USA is something to applaud.

"There is an immense number of kids playing soccer in the US, and the majority of these academies are pay-to-play," he tells KICK OFF. "At club level you also have various leagues, with the top academy league featuring certain MLS clubs and the academies that would feed players into the college scene. Getting into the top colleges is the main driving force behind all the soccer interest for the majority of players from Under-15 and up."

"The facilities and infrastructure available to these town teams and clubs is incredible," he continues. "There is a surplus of multi-purpose artificial fields indoor and outdoor, and grass fields. Even the local parks have fields and goals."

Von Wielligh feels the coaching education in the US will take soccer in the country to the next level.

"Most local town coaches are seeking ways to increase their knowledge, and because they are the direct feeds into academies, all academies share their knowledge and expertise with these local coaches as it ultimately improves the level of players they can choose from," he says.

"The top academies are in the process of restructuring, as they will all need to achieve a specific academy rating based on number of teams and qualified coaching staff."

"Now that there is this huge drive for coaching education, the cycle will drastically improve as local coaches and the huge pool of players will significantly improve."

MLS's popularity has grown in sync with the USA national team, which has enjoyed a widely-publicised following in recent years. At the 2010 World Cup, the Stars and Stripes finished top of their group above England, before being knocked out in the Round of 16. They finished above European heavyweights Portugal in last year's world showpiece, only to fall at the next hurdle again – losing after extra-time to Belgium.



**Blue streak – Star Spanish forward David Villa is enjoying a new lease on life at New York City FC**

The support for the nation did not wane, however: fans in the USA bought more tickets for the 2014 World Cup than any other country besides hosts Brazil, while the team's knock-out clash against the Belgians drew a record 16-million viewers on ESPN – more than the 15.5-million who watched the five-game basketball NBA Finals.

USA's current Fifa ranking of 29th belies the vast improvement made by the team in recent years under coach Jurgen Klinsmann. Before their recent losses in July's Concacaf Gold Cup, where they finished fourth, America had been unbeaten in nine consecutive matches. Two of those friendly victories – in the same week – came over Netherlands and Germany, who fielded eight World Cup winners in their encounter, with the majority of the US squad being drawn from the MLS.

One cannot no longer turn a blind eye to the progress being made in American soccer. The grit and determination of the national team's players have won over many neutral fans, while the influx of global stars to their league continues apace.

Kaizer Chiefs' star centre-back and PSL Player of the Year Tefu Mashamaite was recently on trial at New York City FC, but

failed to earn a contract.

The fact that he had to undergo a trial rather than being signed outright points to one of two things: either an unspoken but lurking disregard for the level of players produced in South Africa's top-flight, or the raised benchmarks of the MLS.

Interest in the American league has attracted followers abroad as well, with England-based Sky Sports securing a four-year television rights deal to broadcast the competition, and ESPN signing rights to show the games until 2022 in a mammoth deal worth \$90-million (R1.2-billion) per year.

US football is growing swiftly, and with the resources, investment and increasing interest, it may be just a matter of time before the MLS becomes a major player in the global game. Orlando City's star Brazilian Kaká certainly thinks so.

"I had the opportunity to stay in Milan," the 2007 Ballon d'Or winner says. "Gerrard and Lampard, they also had the opportunity to stay in Europe. But we decided to come because the league has grown. It's a very important moment for this development.

"A lot of players are looking for this league now. In five, 10 years, it will be one of the biggest in the world." **KO**

## Goals galore

**MLS's goal average compared to major European Leagues and the PSL (2014/15 season):**

<b>PSL</b>	<b>Serie A</b>
<b>Matches:</b> 240	<b>Matches:</b> 380
<b>Goals scored:</b> 555	<b>Goals scored:</b> 1024
(2.31 per match)	(2.69 per match)
<b>Premier League</b>	<b>Bundesliga</b>
<b>Matches:</b> 380	<b>Matches:</b> 306
<b>Goals scored:</b> 975	<b>Goals scored:</b> 843
(2.57 per match)	(2.75 per match)
<b>La Liga</b>	<b>MLS</b>
<b>Matches:</b> 380	<b>Matches:</b> 323
<b>Goals scored:</b> 1009	<b>Goals scored:</b> 924
(2.66 per match)	(2.86 per match)

## SA's MLS stars

Shaun Bartlett and Doctor Khumalo were two of the big-name signings into the MLS when it was formed in 1996. Both had starred for Bafana in the Nations Cup triumph that year, and Bartlett was signed by Colorado Rapids, and Khumalo to Columbus Crew. Bartlett later moved to MetroStars.

Other South African who played in the MLS in that first season were Richard Farrer (Dallas Burn), who later played for Santos, and ex-Wits defender Ivan McKinley (Tampa Bay Mutiny).

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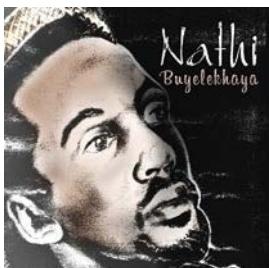
# Stuff we like

The latest fashion trends, cutting edge technology and cool tunes, KICK OFF brings you all the stuff you need to take the street by storm.

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## Music for the soul

**R79 @ iTunes**

At a time when House and Hip Hop enjoys the lion's share of local music airplay and audience, new-kid-on-the-block Nathi has chosen a different path. His debut album titled *Buyelekhaya* is an honest, melodic, acoustic-driven offering for you to sing along to while reflecting on the real life issues he touches on in his lyrics.



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# MIGHTY BLUES FC GET PARKER FOR THE DAY

Kaizer Chiefs and Bafana Bafana striker **Bernard Parker** recently reversed roles in Katlehong, as the player turned coach for the day to run a session with the Mighty Blues Football Club.

BY CHAD KLATE



**M**ighty Blues FC recently won a competition sponsored by skincare specialists

Clere Active and run through KickOff.com – the main prize: a training session with Bernard Parker, who is one of Clere Active's brand ambassadors.

The Kaizer Chiefs striker arrived in his Range Rover to cheering excitement from local kids, who knew as soon as they saw the car that the Amakhosi star had arrived.

Parker kicked off the day by handing over a brand new Nike kit to the group of jubilant Under-19s, who could not wait to start training with Bafana Bafana's second top-goalscorer (23 international goals).

As soon as the Mighty

Blues were kitted out, Parker guided the squad through their warm-up and stretches before splitting them into two teams.

'Die Hond' then explained three different activities – or 'stations' – where they participated in a range of exercises and drills focused on particular skills and aspects of the game – something Parker would likely have learned during his time as a youngster at the Transnet Soccer School of Excellence.

"It was a great session and a wonderful experience to be working with this group," Parker tells KICK OFF.

"They are a good bunch of young lads with a lot of discipline, and they are good listeners – definitely the key elements footballers need to have."

A distinct feature throughout

his training session was Parker's patience when issuing instructions. Parker is a father of two, which gives him an instinct on how to work with kids. He also has background knowledge of coaching due to his previous experience with local community teams in his birthplace of Reiger Park in Boksburg.

"I believe I'm a pro at coaching young boys now," Parker says. "I've always taken time out, especially during the first part of the season when fixtures are not as hectic, to avail myself and train the boys in our community, and I also try to spot talented individuals I can help to place in more structured conditions. I just love kids because of what I do with my own kids every day."

Despite emphasis being placed on development

structures in South Africa and the introduction of Safa's Vision 2022, Parker says the absence of elementary techniques among the Mighty Blues players was particularly evident.

"According to their coach, they are top of their league and are doing well. But I picked up that they lack a lot of the basics, especially passing technique. For an Under-19 team that's poor, but it's a typical problem in South Africa."

"I hope that my presence and sharing of some of my knowledge with them and their coach will help. I did have a chat to their coach and suggested some drills that he could do with them, so hopefully they can use that and adapt quickly and improve as a team." **KO**

# Love at first sight

Former Bafana Bafana defender and Orlando Pirates captain Edward Motale had never driven a Chevrolet before. But the day he did, he was immediately impressed.

BY TIYANI WA KA MABASA

**“**If this car was a footballer, I would say it is skilful” – that’s how Edward Motale

described the Chevrolet Cruze, having spent a day driving the car around Soweto.

‘Magenta’, as Motale was affectionately known in football circles during his heyday in the 90s, spent the better part of his teenage life in Soweto attending school at Orlando West High before going on to play for one of the country’s most-loved sides, Orlando Pirates.

As we drive off, Motale compares the initial Chev driving experience with playing in his first Soweto Derby – arguably the biggest match on the football calendar.

“I’ve never driven a Chev and it feels like the first time I played in the Derby for Pirates – that excitement,” Motale reminisces. “That was in 1994 at FNB Stadium and I couldn’t wait to tackle somebody! That day I earned my first win in the Derby – ah, everybody will love to read that CV!

“I was very interested when they said I’m going to drive around in a Chev, because I’m used to the Chev as a bakkie or van because that’s what you would normally see on TV. I wasn’t sure I would find this comfort and luxury. I was expecting that after minutes of driving this car my back would be sore and now I just feel like driving to Cape Town ... you can’t even feel it on the bumpy roads of Soweto,” he says.

Feeling comfortable in the



driver’s seat, Motale, who played seven matches for Bafana Bafana in the left-back position, was more than happy to show off the sights of Soweto, especially the most popular places in the township while, in his own words, “cruising in the Cruze”.

Our first destination is Orlando Stadium where Magents played many games for the Buccaneers.

“It is cruising very well; everything is so soft, from the power steering to the pedals. It is very comfortable and even the passenger sitting right behind me has space. Everyone is comfortable. As a family

man I need a car like this for space.”

As we arrive at Orlando Stadium, Motale announces: “We used to call it the slaughterhouse, because that’s where we would mesmerise fans and destroy teams. It was my dream to play at Orlando.

“I could say the same about the Cruze. I’m driving a manual car at the moment and I thought that even though this Cruze is an automatic, I was going to hear the gear changes, but I can’t hear anything,” he says.

Our videographer Aljoscha Kohlstock jumps off to film outside the stadium, and on his

return, he forgets to buckle up and the car-seat alarm goes off, much to Motale’s amusement. “This car is talking to me. It is telling me that I must tell my neighbour to fasten his belt,” Motale smiles.

From Orlando Stadium, we pass by the famous Vilakazi Street. This is where the Mandela House is situated and Motale is well-known in the area. As he enjoys some chats with old friends, the Cruze features heavily in the conversation as Motale throws in compliment after compliment.

“Heita da. How are things? We are cruising,” he tells the nearby security guard, before commenting further on his ride for the day.

“Even when we get to the speed humps the video man is not disturbed because this car just cruises. It goes smoothly,” Magents purrs.

“This street is going to become like Long Street in Cape Town. We are in the heart of Soweto,” he continues as he switches attention to the area frequented by tourists to view the house where South Africa’s late president Nelson Mandela and his family lived.

As we cruise along to the Orlando Towers for our final stop, Magents adds: “The Cruze name is no fluke. This car deserves a name like that, because it cruises.”

We couldn’t agree more. **KO**



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# IN THE CENTRE CIRCLE WITH FRIENDS

KICK OFF, along with some lucky readers, gathered for an evening of fine dining and whisky tasting – in the centre circle at Orlando Stadium, with **Lucky Lekgwathi** as the guest of honour.

**L**ucky Lekgwathi never expected this. There, across the centre circle at Orlando Stadium was a crystal dining hall, glittering in the glow of the floodlights.

This is where we were to dine with our hosts from Scottish Leader whisky, our prize-winning KICK OFF reader, a group of influential readers and Orlando Pirates fans, and the Buccaneers' stalwart captain.

"This is where I stand for the toss of the coin," Lekgwathi marveled, as we took our seats at the sumptuously bedecked dining table.

A glittering perspex room in the middle of the hallowed Orlando turf; this not what any of us expected.

We were there to honour Lekgwathi who was voted 'Greatest Ever Leader' on KICK OFF's website, beating a range of respected captains, including Lucas Radebe and Neil Tovey.

Lekgwathi polled the most votes, and one deserving reader was selected from all of those who voted for him, to join us at the dinner.

For Emmanuel Nkuna, who's rationale for selecting Lekgwathi was judged the best (see box on the right), the evening was a dream come true. "My leader," was how this die-hard Pirates supporter addressed Lekgwathi all evening.

This went down especially well with our host, Pierre Meintjies, who was representing Scottish Leader, the Scotch



whisky brand that sponsored KICK OFF's Greatest Ever poll.

While Lekgwathi calls Orlando Stadium a second home, and Nkuna is no stranger to the stadium either, for Meintjies it was only a second visit – the first being to watch the Blue Bulls rugby side.

But, while much of the discussion was about football, Meintjies – a long-time Chelsea fan – was able to keep up, entertaining us with anecdotes about the hierarchy at Scottish Leader, who are all true-blue Rangers fans and never knew that their CEO was a Celtic supporter who managed to hide his heresy for years.

When it came to enjoying the whisky, Meintjies was on very firm ground. He is, after all, one of the 159 Masters of the Quaich (pronounced Quake) in the world, a title bestowed on those recognised for their outstanding commitment to the Scotch whisky industry.

Some people drink only a certain brand of whisky to make a statement about status;

some will throw any whisky down their throats; Meintjies taught us how to identify and really enjoy a good Scotch.

"What makes one whisky taste different from the other is the blend," he explained. "All single malt whiskies have three ingredients, barley, yeast and water; the percentage of malt in the blends is what makes the difference."

Also important, of course, is the age – "the longer the whisky stays in the barrel, the rounder, smoother the taste."

Scottish Leader blended Scotch whisky incorporates 30 blends, from different distilleries around Scotland. Amazingly, the various competing distilleries barter among themselves, trading barrels of whisky allowing each master distiller to create his ideal blend.

"Not for nothing do we refer to Scottish Leader as 'Scotland in a bottle,'" Meintjies quipped.

KICK OFF reader, Fred Mooketsi was unconvinced. A die-hard Buccaneer, and outspoken commentator

on the South African game, Mooketsi turned his sometimes acerbic tongue on the whisky, pronouncing it unfit for his tastes.

Then Meintjies poured him a glass of the Scottish Leader Signature – it stands out on the shelves in its classy green packaging – and Mooketsi was soon purring contentedly, rolling the creamy, honey-flavoured drink over his tongue.

"This is great whisky," he gasped.

We couldn't agree more Fred, and with the tips learnt from Pierre, we know how to enjoy it. No more mixers, not even ice ... just a drop or two of water.

Who ever expected to learn how to enjoy great whisky in the centre circle at Orlando Stadium? KO



## Why Lekgwathi is the Greatest Ever Leader

"I think Lucky is the best player ever. He has emphasised his leadership, quality and discipline on and off the field. He has more than 300 caps under his belt for one of the top teams in SA, won the 'Double Treble' and led Orlando Pirates to the Final of the Champions League in 2013 and semi-final 2006. 'Phinda Mzala' has a never-say-die attitude which is why he is reluctant to retire. He can still offer more to soccer."

– Emmanuel Nkuna



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# STAR LETTER COACHES NEED DEVELOPMENT TOO



We are all crying about the lack of development as a hindrance to our football progress, but we tend to forget about coaches. Most of us grassroots coaches are hard-working labourers by day who come home from work tired and still report to

training where we are not paid anything. Safa expects us to fund our football education from our own pockets, forgetting that most of us don't have the means. As a result, we end up coaching through improvisation and the love we have for the game. Realistically

however, passion alone won't fix this problem and we will always deliver inferior players if coaching projects continue being ignored. You first need to develop the teacher before claiming the best learner.

**Makgale Billy Pule,  
Lotus Gardens**



## Congratulations!

Makgale Billy Pule wins a pair of Adidas LZ TRX Samba boots! Five Predator Zones give explosive power and sublime control, while the Sprintframe gives excellent manoeuvrability and traction. You can also win a pair of Adidas boots by sending your views in a star-quality letter to KICK OFF.

## Make your point to the nation

To air your views, send your letters to Kick Off, People's Forum, PO Box 16368, Vlaeberg, 8018 or e-mail them to [forum@kickoff.com](mailto:forum@kickoff.com)

The views expressed in the letters published in People's Forum do not reflect the views of KICK OFF magazine, its editor, publisher or Media24. The editor reserves the right to edit and shorten letters. Letters shorter than 200 words will be given preference.

## 2010 legacy diminishing

The artificial turfs laid down across the country as part of the 2010 World Cup legacy projects were created to develop future stars, however I have doubts about local municipalities' commitment to the cause. They are demanding big money from teams for their use. These artificial grounds have been strategically and correctly placed in scarcely resourced areas where sponsorships are hard to come by. It's a huge mountain to climb for amateur clubs to sustain themselves every season to cover basic costs such as kit, transport and training equipment. To make matters worse, they have to fork out exorbitant fees in order to play a decent game. I request Safa to negotiate with municipalities to reduce this death sentence on amateur clubs if they really care for football development in SA.

**Lwandle Ndumndum, Mount Ayliff**

## This is not football!

The recent debacle involving Polokwane City and Ajax Cape Town underpaying players shows just how far our game is from realising true professionalism. Roggert Nyundu's salary at Polokwane is a shame. Now Ajax Cape Town have recently been accused of underpaying a player by offering him a paltry R5 300 a month. This is a form of modern day slavery! Where are agents in situations like this? Are clubs deliberately underpaying players or are they financially insolvent? All this is happening in a League that claims to be the 10th richest in the world. I doubt that very much, especially when it's clear there's no minimum salary rule which allows certain clubs to act with impunity when it comes to paying their players.

**Akhona Ndletyana, Cape Town**

## Playing fields not level

The playing fields are not level when it comes to the kind of money being splashed on Orlando Pirates and Kaizer Chiefs. The two clubs earn millions between them for the Carling Cup in what has become a customary lacklustre spectacle. It remains clear there are clubs that will never win the League in our lifetime, let alone domestic trophies, because they don't have the financial muscle. Some clubs don't have a sponsor and yet the Soweto giants have more than 20 between them. Where else

in the world would you find the top two League rivals in bed with each other?

Druza, Cape Town

## Practice what you preach Shakes

When Shakes was coach of the Under-23s he was extremely vocal about the lack of players from the junior ranks graduating to Bafana Bafana level. This blockage in the development pipeline has led to many a talented player disappearing from the scene, causing our national team to suffer in the process. It's time now for Shakes to practice what he's been preaching all along. When clubs refuse to give him players for friendlies and tournaments outside Fifa's international calendar, he must see it as an opportunity to bring in talent from the juniors. He must not resort to desperate tactics by selecting players who hardly feature for their clubs. This makes a mockery of our beloved national team.

Vuyile Bobotyana, Queenstown

## Fifa must establish a new ideology

Michel Platini has emerged as the strongest contender to unseat Sepp Blatter after stating he wants to restore dignity to Fifa house. He's not short of fans, however the reality is more complicated. Blatter continues to enjoy loyal support, notably on our continent, as gratitude for being rewarded the historic 2010 World Cup. Furthermore, Blatter has increased the organisation's revenues dramatically over the years and taken the World Cup to previously untested waters such as Africa, Eastern Europe and the Middle East. With that said, Blatter's fear factor has diminished now that his credibility is damaged. Platini is familiar with Fifa as an institution and has done well at the helm of Uefa which would make him the best candidate to turn the house around.

Wandile Mtana, eTinara

## Sundowns too big for Pitso

Since Pitso took over three seasons ago, he has done nothing but make excuses every time he loses to smaller teams. Many coaches can only dream of the budget, the players and the support Pitso has at Mamelodi Sundowns. Since taking the

## TALKING POINT • Showboating rocking the boat?



### Showboat when the team is winning

Masibusane Zongo must be advised to showboat only when his team is winning. He must be like Rakhalé and Lebese who perform their tricks and skills moving forward therefore creating spaces and chances for their teammates to exploit. Jomo Sono must review Zongo's case and explain to us how the player's showboating is effective. I'll stick with Pitso Mosimane and Deshi Bhaktawer's views. Let us not mislead our country's football here and be firm: a football pitch is not a circus.

Unathi Makalima, Madear

### Flair is not a problem

Whether you are showboating or not, the question is: are you making an impact in the match? Scara Ngobese used his silky skills to impact the game and entertain at the same time. Look at Mark Mayambela for example; he used to be a useless footballer with his purposeless antics, but has since matured. He still pulls off shibobos and other skills we know him for, but with direction. Look what he did to Chiefs. His impact was felt and his pace was impressive. Let's stick to the football we like and know. I'm all for African flair.

Pat Malungani, Polokwane

### Let the boy shine

With the 2015/16 PSL season finally kicking off, Pitso Mosimane has already complained about the man-of-the-match award given to Masibusane Zongo. Pitso is a very good coach, but the pressure at Sundowns is beginning to take its toll with his irresponsible comments. As Zongo said when interviewed by Deshi during a recent post-match interview: "I play my game according to what the coach tells me, so I don't have to worry about what people say." That boy has skill and as long as his coach tells him to use it, let the boy shine.

Letladi wa Ga-Mphahlele, Maralaleng

### The game's changed

I disagree with Siphiwe Mkhonza, the TV analyst, for encouraging youngsters such as Masibusane Zongo, Matlati Makudubela etc. to showboat unnecessarily. Fortunately for us, the big three teams Kaizer Chiefs, Orlando Pirates and Mamelodi Sundowns are coached by locals who've played overseas and can attest to the fact that skill without an end result is useless. How many players are we sending overseas with this showboating? Football has changed dramatically since Jomo Sono and Ace Ntsoelengoe's days.

Siphiwe Fredrick Mthethwa, Ekukwatin

reins, he's had the opportunity to fight for eleven trophies, but only managed to win a paltry two. That equals failure for a coach at a big club like Sundowns. Sometimes we blame owners when they don't put faith in local coaches, but the results and returns are there for all to see. It's time Pitso repays Motsepe's trust by winning two or three trophies this season at the very least.

Solomon Madube, Kadichuene

## High expectations this season

Teams have to start the season with a sense of purpose and finish with a sense of accomplishment. For this to happen, a number of factors need to be addressed. There needs to be 100% commitment from the players and management to achieve the goals. A realistic mandate must be communicated and playing system created that fits the players. Players' salaries and bonuses should be clear from the beginning to ensure it does not interfere with performances.

As we've learned in the past, sacking coaches early in the season is a major problem in the PSL. Coaches live for practice and players live for games, but what happens in the PSL is teams credit

players for wins and blame coaches for losses. Coaches need to balance results and quality performances to avoid heat from management. Referees also play a huge role. We plead for a high standard of decision-making and fair play from referees in 2015/16.

Edmand Makhathini, Durban

## Creative players and fans

Thanks to KICK OFF for the July issue main feature: "The Kings Of Diski". I was touched reading about how things were done yesteryear, with creative players given the licence to express themselves. Supporters were equally creative with the nicknames they gave players to suit their style. We can learn from this as present day supporters. We need to give our players nicknames that will make them tick. Chanting 'Phinda Mzala', 'Navigator' and 'Yeye' from the stands creates a great atmosphere and builds respect between fans and players.

Andries Moreo, Saulspoort

## Chile's unsung hero

When you mention Chile's national team it's easy to pick out household names

such as Gary Medel, Claudio Bravo, Alexis Sanchez and Arturo Vidal to name a few. Not many would mention the underrated midfield maestro who goes by the name of Jorge Luis Valdivia in the same breath. During the entire Copa America tournament, he controlled his area with class, coolness and composure. He would often provide killer passes that would change games in an instant. He was Chile's engine and a true number 10.

Kabelo Moeketsi

## Good luck to all teams

The 2015/16 season has arrived with most teams having enjoyed a thorough pre-season. I expect to see great football judging by what I've seen so far. Clubs have bolstered their squads well with new signings and I believe they are all ready to take each other on. I appeal to the players to dish out good football with many goals hitting the back of the net. High-scoring games will surely bring fans back to the stadiums. Good luck!

Sphelele Mbuyazi, Richards Bay

## Please support Cosafa

I am not happy with KICK OFF for not doing enough to promote our regional

## KICK OFF KAPPA KIT-OUT

### KIT OUT YOUR TEAM WITH KICK OFF & KAPPA

KICK OFF and Italian sports apparel manufacturers KAPPA team up to bring readers the chance to win playing kit for themselves and their teammates.

This month's KICK OFF Kappa kit is awarded to Musong All Stars from Sterkspruit in the Eastern Cape. Coach Mottelepula Belebesi will receive the brand new kit on behalf of the team.

#### THESE WERE THEIR ANSWERS TO OUR QUESTIONS:

##### 1. My team deserves to be kitted out by Kappa because ...

Sport is our passion and entertainment that keeps us going, even with limited opportunities. We hate not being taken seriously because we're from the villages and we'd be grateful for the opportunity to wear Kappa and represent Sterkspruit.

##### 2. What I like most about KICK OFF

#### for 2015/16 is ...

They are concerned about football as a whole from grassroots level to the professional ranks. It's refreshing to read about players' football and personal backgrounds.

**3. Something I don't like about KICK OFF is ...** We sometimes struggle to find it here in the villages. We often have to travel long distances to buy it.

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com or post a letter to PO Box 16368, Vlaeberg, 8018 with your answers to the three questions above and a quality picture.

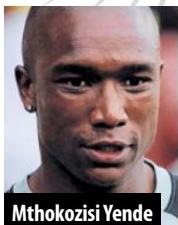
football. After Namibia won the Cosafa Cup in Durban, their triumph was not published in our beloved magazine. Namibia's captain was interviewed in the July edition, but nothing was mentioned about his triumph! If it was a team from Europe we would have seen a special edition double-page spread. Let's support and promote our own region whether there are international caps involved or not.

**Sau Nanyemba, Rundu, Namibia**

*Ed's note: Point taken Sau – we will do better next time!*

## LOOKALIKES

**DX SMOOTH**



Mthokozisi Yende



Tyrese Gibson

If ever actor/singer Tyrese Gibson needed a body double for his action scenes, he should look no further than Mzansi's very own Mthokozisi Yende.

## Send us your look-alikes and WIN!

Pitso Notshi from Johannesburg wins himself a DX Smooth men's skincare hamper worth R350 for sending us his lookalikes. Put your matchmaking skills to the test and you too can be a winner!



Send us your lookalikes (one of whom must be a soccer personality) along with your name and location to [competitions@kickoff.com](mailto:competitions@kickoff.com). Use 'DX Smooth Lookalikes' in the subject line.

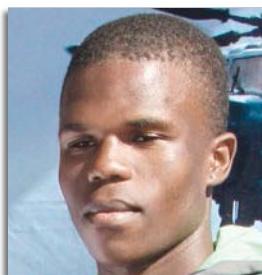
## BEAT THE PLAYER

1. Who won the 2015 Carling Black Label Cup?
2. Who scored the winning goal for Arsenal against Chelsea in the 2015 Community Shield?
3. How many players did Golden Arrows sign in July (8, 10, 13 or 15)?
4. Which club won the 2014/15 Women's FA Cup in England?
5. Former Black Leopards coach Zeca Marques is now coaching which team?
6. Who is Manchester United's new technical sponsor (Puma, Adidas, Reebok or Umbro)?
7. Who wears jersey number 10 for Orlando Pirates for League matches?
8. Matthew Rusike parted ways with CD Nacional and signed for which Swedish side?
9. How many local coaches are on the cover of KICK OFF Magazine's August issue?
10. Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang signed a new contract at Borussia Dortmund for how many years (2, 3, 4 or 5)?



**SOLOMON MADUBE**

**AGE:** 28  
**FROM:** Bakenberg  
**TEAM:** Mamelodi Sundowns



**RYDER MAFEMO**

**AGE:** 21  
**FROM:** Setumong  
**TEAM:** Bafana Bafana



**KATLEGO MASHEGO**

**AGE:** 28  
**POSITION:** Midfield  
**TEAM:** Free State Stars

- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| 1. Orlando Pirates<br><b>(correct)</b>     | 1. Orlando Pirates<br><b>(correct)</b>     | 1. Orlando Pirates<br><b>(correct)</b>     |
| 2. Oxlaide-Chamberlain<br><b>(correct)</b> | 2. Oxlaide-Chamberlain<br><b>(correct)</b> | 2. Oxlaide-Chamberlain<br><b>(correct)</b> |
| 3. 10<br><b>(incorrect)</b>                | 3. 13<br><b>(correct)</b>                  | 3. 13<br><b>(correct)</b>                  |
| 4. Chelsea Ladies<br><b>(correct)</b>      | 4. Chelsea Ladies<br><b>(correct)</b>      | 4. Chelsea Ladies<br><b>(correct)</b>      |
| 5. Milano United<br><b>(incorrect)</b>     | 5. Santos<br><b>(correct)</b>              | 5. Santos<br><b>(correct)</b>              |
| 6. Adidas<br><b>(correct)</b>              | 6. Adidas<br><b>(correct)</b>              | 6. Adidas<br><b>(correct)</b>              |
| 7. No-one<br><b>(correct)</b>              | 7. No-one<br><b>(correct)</b>              | 7. No-one<br><b>(correct)</b>              |
| 8. Malmo<br><b>(incorrect)</b>             | 8. Halmstads BK<br><b>(correct)</b>        | 8. Not sure<br><b>(incorrect)</b>          |
| 9. 2<br><b>(incorrect)</b>                 | 9. 3<br><b>(correct)</b>                   | 9. 1<br><b>(incorrect)</b>                 |
| 10. 4 years<br><b>(incorrect)</b>          | 10. 5 years<br><b>(correct)</b>            | 10. 5 years<br><b>(correct)</b>            |

**TOTAL: 5/10**

**TOTAL: 10/10**

**TOTAL: 8/10**

Two readers take on a PSL star in a quiz. You can also take part by sending a hi-res photo with your full name, age, phone number and location to [forum@kickoff.com](mailto:forum@kickoff.com), with the subject line 'Beat the Player'.

## KAA-BOOM! Ronaldo gets rejected on Instagram!



Cristiano Ronaldo had to swallow his pride after being rejected by beautiful Brazilian model Aline Lima on Instagram.

As reported in the *Mirror*, when Aline learned that Ronaldo was in Australia where she's based, the model and make-up artist sent him a message on Instagram asking if he had received a fan letter from her boyfriend Alex. But replies from the 30-year-old turned racy, as he asked her in their native Portuguese: "Can I have a photo when you are in the gym?"

**Her response was:** "No, my boyfriend would not be happy." **Ronaldo boldly replied:** "No one knows, baby. Quiet." **He added:** "I will not show anybody."



## Didn't see that coming ... right?

Mamadou Sakho pretended to be a Liverpool fan standing in line to get Adam Lallana's autograph during the Reds' pre-season tour to Australia, much to the amusement of the crowd.



## Messi's 'Zidane' moment

Lionel Messi was lucky to receive only a yellow card after a heated exchange with Roma's Mapou Yanga-Mbiwa, as he aimed a headbutt at the defender by in Barcelona's 3-0 pre-season win.



## That yellow card was worth it!

This must be the craziest way to get booked! During an indoor soccer tournament in Dubai, one player couldn't contain his excitement at the prospect of playing alongside Zinedine Zidane. He took a selfie with him in the middle of the game, but the referee gave the player a yellow card for his sneaky move.



## This is one thrifty Aston Villa fan

This Aston Villa fan found an innovative way to save money this 2015/16 season by re-arranging the lettering on his old Christian Benteke jersey for the club's new striker Rudy Gestede.

## Ibrahimovic's tailor-made training gear



Zlatan Ibrahimovic was feeling uncomfortable in his long trousers while training with the Swedish national team, and called a member of the coaching staff to do an emergency tailoring job. Ibrahimovic was quickly back on the field with his newly-modified shorts.

## LAUGH WITH PROFF

**CONTACT PROFF** To get in touch with Proff, check out his blog – [diskioff.blogspot.com](http://diskioff.blogspot.com) – or catch him on [www.kickoff.com/forum](http://www.kickoff.com/forum).

## Bid rejected!



Black Leopards had a sensational R7000 offer for Liverpool striker Mario Balotelli rejected!

This is what Black Leopards boss David Thidiela had written in his bid letter: "We have never bought someone for that amount of money, but decided to break the bank and bid for Balotelli. This is a lot of money for us here in Venda. It's like €70-million!"

## George Lebese wants a divorce

Kaizer Chiefs midfielder George Lebese wants to divorce his wife. Here is an excerpt of the court proceedings:

**Judge:** Do you have a lawyer to represent you sir?

**George Lebese:** Don't need one, my English is good and very fresh!

**Judge:** Okay, I'm

going to ask you one question.

**George Lebese:**

Okay, you can ask.

**Judge:** On which grounds do you want to divorce this lady?

**George Lebese:** Yerrr, any ground Your Honour! FNB Stadium, Orlando Stadium, Moses Mabhida Stadium or Peter Mokaba Stadium!

## MTN8: As it happened

Facebook live text commentary from the Orlando Pirates Supporter's page during the MTN8 quarter-final clash between Kaizer Chiefs and Maritzburg United:

**8 minutes** - Kaizer Chiefs 0-1 Maritzburg United: Lol bashes bahleka!

**45 minutes** - Chiefs 0-2 Maritzburg: Hahaha they're joining us (Pirates), without Stuart Baxter they're nothing.

Thank God!

**47 minutes** - Chiefs 1-2 Maritzburg: This is just a consolation goal *nje*.

**56 minutes** - Chiefs 2-2 Maritzburg: Eish, but they're not good at penalties. Maritzburg United must park the bus.

**70 minutes** - Chiefs 3-2 Maritzburg: We don't care about the MTN8, we are playing CAF games!

**83 minutes** - Chiefs 3-3 Maritzburg: Please Maritzburg, finish the job!

**115 minutes** - Chiefs 4-3 Maritzburg: No status ...

**120 minutes** - Chiefs 5-3 Maritzburg: Useless ... at least we are the only club in South Africa with a star!



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**the secret footballer**

# WHEN TIME RUNS OUT

THE excitement of signing your first professional contract is one of the highlights of your career. It's the start of the dream: earning money to play the game you love. What could be better? Your head is in the clouds, and all you can think about are the glory days ahead. There is not a moment spent thinking about the end of your career or the end of the contract.

This is a major aspect of professional football that is largely ignored by the public, but it is a crucial part of the cycle of professional sport. At what stage in your career are you not worth good money?

Your career is winding down, and now the offers are of a few thousand Rand here and there; Second Division teams who want you to help their youngsters gain experience, but not pay the big cheques nor the big bonuses or the sponsored gear – those days are over. This can be very difficult to come to terms with.

You get near the end of your contract and the doors are open for other offers. You are expecting your club to renew your contract, but it doesn't come. The club suggests you are allowed to talk to other parties – that's when you realise you are no longer wanted. The club tells you they are considering their options.

Other clubs make contact, and agents are calling you to find out what your plans are. But the calls start to dry



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up. Interest fades and you start to panic. You've been playing football for the past 10 years – you don't know any other business. What will you do?

You start to ask fellow players to find out if there are any clubs interested in you. They 'promise' to get back to you but they don't. You have reminded them of their own mortality – they need to look after themselves first. You leave messages, you email everyone and you sit and you wait. Most business people retire at 65 and here you are in your early 30s having to think about retiring from all you know.

Then the coach asks you to train with the juniors and the trialists; you've been cut from the herd. Your teammates avoid you. They don't want to hear your complaints about the way you've been treated. You find

yourself doing basic drills with the trialists, drills you can do in your sleep. You know there are only three months of your salary left ...

You lie awake at night thinking of those weird offers from Indonesia and India, and they now seem like good options. But it's too late: those clubs have made all their foreign signings already. Panic.

You spend more time checking out your bank account. You suddenly take an interest in your debit orders and don't go out to restaurants every week. You are counting the days to the end of the contract, reading the job section of the newspaper, checking websites for any news of opportunities, another chance, anything.

The days are coming and going quicker now, time is running out, your mind is a

million miles away. You wonder where it all went wrong. Was it just last season? 'But I didn't play that badly, I was involved in the starting XI for more than half the League matches! I did well when I played! I had a few minor injuries, but nothing that kept me out for too long.'

'I've always been disciplined, I've been a team player and I've never caused any problems – why am I not wanted now?'

Then one morning the team manager calls you over and says the coach wants to meet you after training. You start thinking that this is the final nail in your coffin. You start to think of all the things you want to say to the coach, all the complaints and hatred that have built up inside you, the way they have treated – it's all UNFAIR!

You walk into the office after training, ready to give the coach a piece of your mind, ready for battle, ready to tell him to stick his team where it hurts and he tells you he wants to keep you involved in the squad.

WHAT? He says he needs your experience to help some of the youngsters in the squad. You take the offer.

It's only a six-month extension, the salary is reduced and you are not in a position to negotiate. You walk out of the office feeling like you have won a battle, but the clock is already ticking again. Tick Tock. Time is running out. **KO**

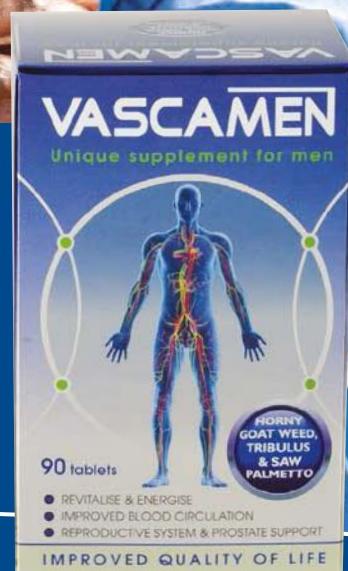
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